

<b>Report title:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report 2020/21	
<b>Report to:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
<b>Report author:</b> Sophie Campion, Secretary to the Panel	
<b>Date:</b> 17 June 2021	<b>For:</b> Noting
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> 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 2020/21 municipal year.

### 2. Recommendation

That the Panel receive and note the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report for 2020/21.

### 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, 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 working alongside 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

The membership of the Panel for 2020/21 was as below from 1 August 2020:

Councillor A McGurran	Basildon Borough Council
Councillor W Schmitt	Braintree District Council (Chairman)
Councillor C Hossack	Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor G Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Councillor J Lager	Chelmsford City Council
Councillor M Lilley	Colchester Borough Council
Councillor H Whitbread	Epping Forest District Council
Councillor M Maddocks	Essex County Council (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor F Mason	Harlow District Council
Councillor M Helm	Maldon District Council
Councillor M Webb	Rochford District Council
Councillor I Shead	Southend Borough Council
Councillor L McWilliams	Tendring District Council
Councillor J Redsell	Thurrock Council
Councillor C Day	Uttlesford District Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member
Sheila Murphy	Independent Member

A change in membership took place in November 2020 with the appointment of Councillor M Heard to represent Maldon District Council to replace Councillor M Helm. A further change to the membership took place in January 2021 with the appointment of Councillor C Vince on behalf of Harlow District Council to replace Councillor F Mason.

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 2020/21**

4.1 During 2020/21, 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](https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Committees/tabid/161/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/679/id/127/Default.aspx)

- 4.2 The Work Programme for 2020/21 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 At its meeting in June 2020, the Panel reviewed the additional commitments and performance measures added to the Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020 as a result of the postponement of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Panel also received a report providing an overview of the response to the CoVID-19 pandemic by the PFCC, Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.
- 4.5 In July 2020 the Panel considered the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan 2019 – 2024 and the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2016-2020, based on data and other information for the year April 2019 to March 2020. The Panel sought clarification on a number of issues including the impact of COVID-19 on some of the activities. The Panel noted the report.
- 4.6 The Panel received its first annual report on Complaints at its meeting in October 2020, reporting that five complaints against the PFCC had been received during the period 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020. Three of the complaints had been taken through the Panel's complaints process to informal resolution and two were still being processed. Since the report was made, one of these two complaints has been concluded by informal resolution after being considered by the Complaints Sub-Committee. The Panel is due to receive its second Annual Complaints Report at its meeting in October 2021.
- 4.7 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 December meeting the Panel considered and approved the Annual Report of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. In October 2020 the Panel considered and noted the Fire and Rescue Statement of Assurance.
- 4.8 In December 2020, the Panel considered the Commissioner's proposed appointment for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Head of Finance. The Panel questioned the candidate regarding their professional competence and subsequently confirmed the appointment.
- 4.9 In line with its statutory responsibility, the Panel formally considered the Commissioner's precept proposal at its meeting on 4 February 2021 and the Panel endorsed the Commissioner's proposals to set the Band D Police element of the Council Tax for 2021-22 at an increase of £9.90 a year (2.94%); and no increase in the precept for the Fire and Rescue element. In carrying out this responsibility, the Panel attended a budget workshop on 9 October 2020 and 25 November 2020, and a further workshop on 19 January 2021 where Members reviewed the Essex Police

2021/22 budget update and medium Term Financial Strategy and the Essex Fire and Rescue 2021/22 budget update and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 The Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee met once in 2020/21, to consider a confidential matter falling within its remit.
- 4.12 In addition to the formal Panel meetings, the Panel held a briefing in December 2020 at which they received a presentation on Data Analytics.
- 4.13 Informal Panel briefings were instigated during the year which focus primarily on scoping the key focus areas 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.
- 4.14 The final version of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-24 (IRMP) was noted by the Panel in July 2020, along with the contribution of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel Sub-Group formed to work with the Commissioner's office in developing the IRMP.
- 4.15 Panel members and the support officer 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.
- 4.16 The Chairman, a number of other Panel members and the support officers attended the National Conference for Police (Fire) and Crime Panels. The conference included key-note addresses from Yvette Cooper MP, Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee and Andy Burnham, Greater Manchester Combined Authority Mayor and PCC, amongst others.
- 4.17 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 10 December 2020 and will receive the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Budget Outturn Report 2020/21 at its meeting in June 2021.

## 5.0 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel 2021/2

5.1 The schedule of Panel meetings for 2021/22 are set out below:-

- 17 June 2021
- 21 October 2021
- 9 December 2021
- 3 February 2022

5.2 The work programme for 2021/22 is set out below:

Date	Business
17 June 2021 (AGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Balanced Appointment Objective Report</li><li>• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures (Quarter 4 2020/21)</li><li>• 2022/23 Budget Setting Process</li><li>• Essex PFCP Grant Claim and Outturn Report – 2020/21</li><li>• Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report</li><li>• PFCC Decisions Report</li></ul>
21 October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Essex Country Fire and Rescue Service End of Year Performance Report 2020-21</li><li>• PFCC Annual Report</li><li>• Fire and Rescue Statement and Annual Report</li><li>• PFCC Decisions Report</li><li>• 2022/23 Budget Scene Setting</li><li>• Report on Annual Complaints 2020-21</li></ul>
9 December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Essex PFCP Budget Half Year Outturn Report</li><li>• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures (Quarter 2 2021/22)</li><li>• PFCC Decisions Report</li></ul>
3 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposed Police Precept for 2022-23</li><li>• Proposed Essex Fire and Rescue Service Precept for 2022-23</li></ul>

The Panel may wish to review its activities in 2020/21 and make recommendations on the work programme for 2021/22. 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.).