

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel **Date:** Tuesday, 21 February 2012

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.55 pm

Members Present: Councillors Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), Mrs C Pond (Vice-Chairman), W Breare-Hall, Mrs T Cochrane, A Mitchell MBE, G Mohindra, P Spencer and Mrs E Webster

Other Councillors: Councillors D Jacobs and Mrs P Smith

Apologies: -

Officers Present: J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), J Nolan (Assistant Director (Environment & Neighbourhoods)), C Wiggins (Safer Communities Manager) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance: County Cllr. A Jackson, Chief Super. O'Malley and Superintendent Coombs

41. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted there were no substitute members.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

43. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The notes from the 10 January 2012 meeting were agreed as a correct record.

44. ESSEX POLICE BLUEPRINT

The Panel welcomed Chief Superintendent C. O'Malley and Superintendent A. Coombs, from Essex Police. They were present to talk about the progress of the Essex Police reform programme resulting from the budget cuts which obliged the police to make £41million of savings over the next 4 years. A copy of their presentation is attached to these minutes.

Essex Police at present have 3,500 police officers; over 350 Police Community Support officers and will soon have 600 special constables. They also have 877 vehicles travelling 15.8 million miles per annum and 112 operational buildings (twice as many as Kent own). There were 1.7 million residents in 730,000 households with 25,000 emergency calls handled per month.

They were already improving productivity, reducing costs, increasing availability and at the same time reducing the size of the force.

They were moving away from their traditional model and to the concept of 'Borderless' policing, which in practice meant that the nearest vehicle would be sent to an incident and not as before, when it would be the nearest vehicle belonging to the area that the incident took place in. These would be co-ordinated by response hubs.

The Panel noted that they had reduced senior management by 25%, but were having difficulty in targeting middle management as they had legal obligations in that only certain ranks could authorise certain things. They had reduced the number of Chief Superintendents to five.

There was to be an increase in designated Neighbourhood Policing Officers and a focus on anti-social behaviour and non-emergency, no crime incidents as well as in depth public engagement. There would also be additional support from a larger Neighbourhood Team to deal with the demand. Every area will have a Community Safety and Partnership Unit to be led by a designated Inspector and Sergeant. The unit was to be based at Epping police Station with satellite offices at Brentwood, Ongar and Loughton. These units would bring Crime Reduction Officers, Essex Watch Administrators together with Local Licensing Officers making for multi-agency working.

In order to publicise the new arrangements they had spoken to several newspapers and all MPs in the county. They were getting around as much as they could over the county. However, it was noted that the local press did tend to play up the bad news such as the reduction of police officers over Essex. Members noted that it would be better to get information, not from the local press, but from the appropriate websites or local posters.

The remit of the new officers would change; the new 'Investigative Command' would handle the paperwork enabling the local PCs to stay longer out on patrol. With the new technology they could also work out how much time an officer was spending at their locations.

Essex Police were also reviewing and reforming their estate portfolio. The Panel noted that they had a lot of property and were actively selling surplus buildings, enabling them to reduce their annual revenue costs for maintenance of the Force Estate (currently £8 million). They were asked how members would know which were being kept, as a lot of community groups would like the use these buildings. They were told that a consultation document was sent out to local authorities; they would always consider a bid from a local partner organisation. But they had a financial responsibility to sell if possible to create capital. They would resend to EFDC as officers had not received this consultation document as yet.

Essex Police Force had 48 stations, including front counters and Neighbourhood Policing bases. There were also 44 other police buildings and 20 buildings within their HQ complex. There were 112 properties in total in addition to 12 partner bases. They were looking to close front counters but not necessarily the buildings they were in. In this district the front counter for Epping would be open from 12.00 to 6.00pm Monday to Saturday and the one in Loughton would be open at the same times. The ones in Waltham Abbey and Ongar were now closed. They had done a survey on public contact and found out that most people would phone and not visit a station. They were trying to future proof the selling of the buildings by looking at areas of expansion and keeping the building in those areas for future use. This would be reviewed in 2013/14.

The Waltham Abbey station had been assessed for partnership sharing opportunities; however there would be no future planning on this until post Olympics 2012, due to the specialist Airwave Mast provision from this site.

The force will be split into Operational Policing Commands with patrols being borderless rather than be geographically restricted. They would make the best use of new technology such as Mobile Data Tablets and the Automatic Resource Locations System. A new Tactical Support Group capable of rapidly responding to demands across the force, would also be setup.

Councillor Mohindra noted that they had got their Automatic Resource Location System from the Ambulance Service; are there things that other services do that the Police do not? He was told that they work closely with the other services and considered how they worked. New technology would entail major investments that would have to be made. The National Police Improvement Agency looked at all the new technology for the police across the country.

Councillor Smith commented that it was important for the Council that the analytical data post was kept and the data available for use. She was told that they still had funding for this post (Thurrock would part fund it), and it would be based at Chelmsford and were trying to fill it at present. They were attempting to centralise their analytical abilities. Undoubtedly the cut of £41million would create some problems and they would have to refocus their service provisions.

Councillor Jacobs noted that our main urban population was next to East London – how would the proposed changes affect their relationship with the Metropolitan Police. He was told that they have an effective working relationship with the Met. Police and there should be no change.

Councillor Webster asked if they were still recruiting and was told that they had recently had their first intake of new recruits. Recruitment had to continuous to keep their numbers level. They tended to have a lot of transfers, especially to the Met.

Councillor Webster said that part of Waltham Abbey came under the Met and this can cause confusion. She was told that there were no plans to change the boundaries.

Councillor Spencer asked if they were able to cut down on paperwork and was told that they had tried to reduce the bureaucracy over the last five years, but unfortunately they had to get rid of a large number of support staff. Hopefully, technology would help.

Councillor Sartin asked about the policing at Stansted Airport and was told that it was not affected as they were privately funded. Councillor Sartin then asked about their relationship with the British Transport Police. She was told that they meet regularly and have a good working relationship with them.

Councillor Anthony Jackson, the Chairman of the Essex Police Authority added that:

- The new blueprint was not entirely new, nor was borderless policing as they have it in Kent;
- This was a better way to organise the force and not just a way to save money;
- The force has a 'Pathfinder' programme to test out new systems especially in helping to contact officers;
- There was just enough Capital investment to invest in the things that they needed;

- The plan was based on a 2.5% increase on the Council Tax precept over the next four years; but they were told in November that they could have a grant of £2.5 million as long as they had no increases in the next two years; and
- The Police Authority had supported the 3.5% increase for this year.

The Chairman thanked Chief Superintendent O'Mally and Superintendent Coombs for their presentation and for answering the member's questions.

45. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Councillor Anthony Jackson, the Chairman of the Essex Police Authority, spoke about the upcoming Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections. He noted that this had not really been publicised as much as it should have been, and that most people knew very little about what the new commissioner would do.

The time line would be that on 15 October 2012 the election for the PCC would be declared. On 15 November 2012 the elections would be held and on midnight plus one minute, of 22 November, the new PCC would take office.

In many ways the PCC would have the same role as the police authorities they replace. Their main responsibilities will be to secure an efficient and effective police force for their area; appoint a Chief Constable and hold them to account and if necessary dismiss them; set the Police and Crime Objectives for their area; set an annual force budget and police precept; produce an annual report; co-operate with the criminal justice system in their area; and work with partners and fund community safety activity to tackle crime and disorder.

A large organisation would then be put in the hands of one person, the new Commissioner, looking after 1.7 million people of Essex. The success of this would also depend on a lot of co-operation and good will from the forces. The Panel noted that:

- The PCC will be the budget holder;
- A PCC Transition Board will be put in place to hand over the baton so that the new PCC could hit the ground running;
- The PCC, in consultation with the Chief Constable will have to produce a five year Police and Crime Plan;
- The PCC would set the annual force budget and police precept, and produce and annual report setting out their progress against the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan;
- There was still a tangle of legal issues to sort out, such as who owned the property;
- The PCC will pursue collaboration to save money;
- Essex Police had already saved £8 million by collaborating with Kent Police; and
- A National Police Air Service was being formed.

Councillor Breare-Hall asked how important it was for a potential candidate to have a background in law and order. Councillor Jackson replied that what was more important was a keen intellect, energy and leadership. The policing aspects would soon be picked up.

The Director of Environment and Street Scene, John Gilbert, had attended a conference where it was established that the government were behind partnership working in a big way. It was also noted that the public were not very aware of what a PCC would be and what their responsibilities were and how important the job was. Home Office officials would try and ensure that the public are informed over the next

few months so that they can make an informed decision in November. Generally, this would be a powerful role with potentially the power to sack Chief Constables. They were hopeful that the PCC would be voted in with more than just a 20 or 25% voter turnout.

Councillor Smith commented that this was being taken seriously here. The Secretary of State was transferring a lot of powers and a lot of funding to this new post. She was also very concerned about the victims of crime, presently the budget for this was ring fenced, but it will be transferred to the PCC and the ring fencing taken away; funding will have to be bid for in the future. It was also important that we influenced the first policing plan for Essex. The Safer Communities Manager, Caroline Wiggins added that they were hoping persuade the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to continue doing this work.

It was noted that unlike police authorities, Commissioners would not be classed as a 'responsible authority' under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and so would not be a statutory member of the Community Safety Partnership. However they will have a mutual duty to co-operate to reduce crime and disorder and re-offending.

The PCC will also be able to make crime and disorder reduction grants to any organisation or person in their force area. In order to give the PCC's a budget to make these grants the Home Office was looking to transfer various funds to the PCCs from 2012.

Councillor Sartin asked at what point the Police Authority would disappear. She was told that it would be on 22 November 2012.

John Gilbert added that at the conference he had attended the Minister had made the following points:

- that there was a positive commitment to partnership working;
- public health and mental health reforms were to be linked in to this reform;
- they were empathic to transfer powers to the lowest possible level –saying “it was up to you” to put any points across to the PCC;
- it was made clear this was about policing as a whole, not just community policing; and
- asked what success would look like he responded “less crime”.

Councils would have a direct role in holding commissioners to account. A Police and Crime Panel (PCP) will have to be established for every police force area to scrutinise the PCC and support them in the effective exercise of their functions. Each council in the force area will appoint a councillor on to the Panel, with the Panel having a minimum of 10 Councillors and two co-opted members.

Councillor Mohindra asked if the Police and Crime Panel would have any teeth. Mr Jackson said they would have very little, almost none. They would have the power to:

- Require the Commissioner (or a member of his staff) to attend the Panel to answer questions;
- Request the Chief constable to attend to answer questions;
- Appoint an acting Commissioner from amongst the Commissioner's staff if the Commissioner has resigned;
- Veto the Commissioner's proposed precept if two-thirds of the members of the Panel vote in favour of doing so; and
- Veto the Commissioner's proposed appointment of a Chief Constable if two-thirds of the members of the Panel votes in favour of doing so.

Mr Gilbert noted that on the Police and Crime Panel should have space for one person from each District Council (the total number on the Panel should not exceed 20). It should be a member with a Scrutiny background and would have to be an appointment made at the annual council meeting in May.

Councillor Smith noted that our Overview and Scrutiny Committee could not scrutinise the PCC, and we would have to liaise with the PCP. It was noted that the PCP would only scrutinise the Commissioner and not the Police; and that the PCP had only a limited role.

46. DEFRA CONSULTATION ON WASTE RELATED PENALTIES

The Panel noted that that the government wanted to review waste related law on the premise that too many local authorities were unnecessarily penalising residents for what was seen as trivial offences.

The government had now come forward with its proposals for changing the law. It presented two main options:

- (1) the creation of mainly civil sanctions, but with the retention of some criminal sanctions; and
- (2) the removal of all criminal sanctions.

The government's preference was to decriminalise, and the report suggested to members that this was the preferred way forward, but with some caveats.

This Council had always strived not to apply sanctions to householders but to educate and cajole them into behaving reasonably. The Council had also instituted weekly collection of food and garden waste to alleviate some of the more common complaints.

If option 2 was seen as the preferred way forward, then the questions were whether civil enforcement was sufficient to deal the problems which arose and whether it was practical and/or financially viable for councils to pursue civil debts.

It was thought important however, to ensure that the criminal powers which remain are fit for purpose and do enable councils to take action where appropriate.

The Panel considered the proposed response to the Defra consultation and made the following comments:

- This was an overreaction to what was printed in the newspapers;
- Officers were of the opinion that option 2 was preferable but were still to be convinced that harm to the local amenity was to be established. They gave examples of where failure to comply with recycling procedures could cause the load being rejected at the recycling plant. The council must maintain an ultimate sanction of a criminal offence where appropriate;
- The council at present permits a reasonably shut bin (a smiley bin) and take a realistic view on this;
- Occasionally bins are rejected and a sticker is left explaining why it was not collected;
- It was noted that flats have problems recycling but officers were on the way to putting in a programme especially for flats;
- Members agreed that the harm to the local amenity test had not been properly thought through; and

- They noted that if needed officers could use other legislation to catch the prolific offender.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the Safer Cleaner Greener Standing Panel's comments, they endorsed the draft response to the Defra consultation on waste related penalties.

47. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME

(1) The Panel would consider their Work Programme at their next meeting.

(2) Councillor Webster suggested that the Fire Services should be scrutinised after the Olympics. They would be having to institute new ways of working as the Police have. It would be a good idea to have them give this Panel a presentation.

However, it was noted that the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee had such an item already on their Work Programme (item 12 of the WP). They should be asked if they were content for this Panel to take on this piece of work in their stead.

48. FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings of the Panel were noted.

CHAIRMAN

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Operational Policing Blueprint

Epping Scrutiny Committee

21.02.2012





Setting the scene

- 3,500 police officers
- Over 350 Police Community Support Officers
- 600 Special Constables
- 877 vehicles travelling 15.8million mile per annum
- 112 operational buildings covering 97,000 m²
- Net revenue expenditure £262million
- Cover 1400 sq. miles
- 1.7million residents in 730,000 households
- 25,000 emergency calls handled per month



Ambition for the 'Blueprint'

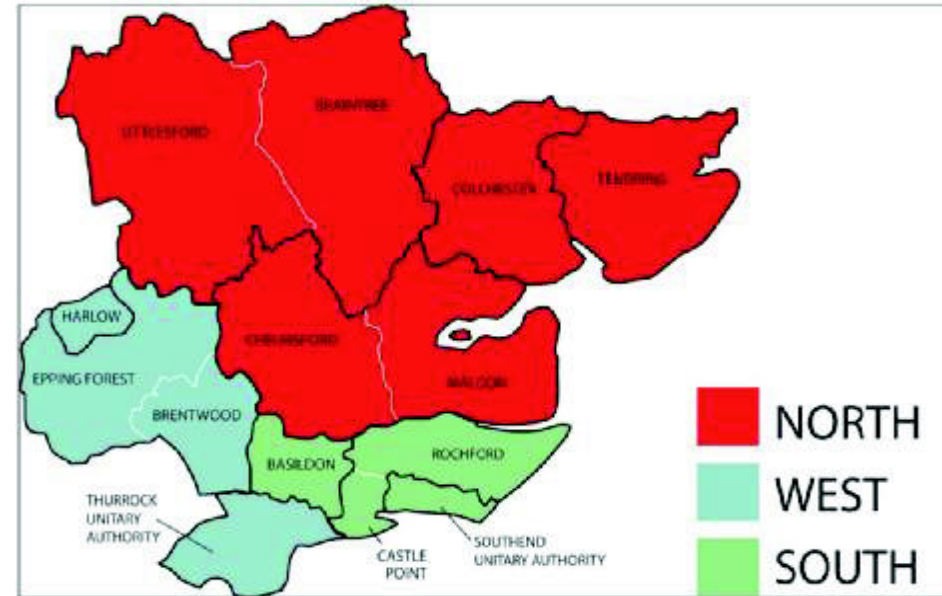
To reconfigure operational services across the force to:

- Improve productivity
- Increase availability
- Reduce cost



What will change?

- “Borderless” policing concept:



Move away from traditional BCU model and geographical constraints on resources

Response hubs



Neighbourhood Policing

- An increase in designated Neighbourhood Policing officers
- Epping Forest / Brentwood staffing numbers:

| Rank | Current | Post-Blueprint |
|-----------------|---------|----------------|
| Chief Inspector | 1 / 1 | 1 |
| Inspector | 2 / 1 | 3 |
| Sergeant | 4 / 3 | 6 / 3 |
| PC | 21 / 11 | 27 / 16 |
| TOTAL | 44 | 57 |



Neighbourhood Policing

- An increase in designated Neighbourhood Policing officers.
- Focus on anti-social behaviour and non emergency / priority, non crime incidents as well as in depth public engagement, long term problem solving and quality of life issues.
- Additional support from a larger Neighbourhood Team to deal with general demand.
- Support from the Special Constabulary.
- Community Safety & Partnerships Unit, led by a designated Inspector and sergeant and comprising Essex Watch Administrators, Crime Reduction Officers and Licensing Staff. This unit is based at Epping Police station with satellite offices at Brentwood, Ongar and Loughton.



REFORM ESTATE REVIEW - OBJECTIVES

- **Rationalisation of existing estate to achieve:**
 - Capital receipts from sale of buildings surplus to requirements
 - Subsequent reduction in annual revenue cost of maintaining Force Estate (currently £8 million)
- **Ensure that the Operational Blueprint is supported by the right number of buildings in the right locations**
- **Maximise utilisation of retained accommodation (eg. Waltham Abbey)**
- **Work within the constraints of the existing estate**
- **Progress Partnership Sharing opportunities (eg. Wa)**



FORCE ESTATE SUMMARY

At commencement of review:

- 48 police stations (front counters and Neighbourhood Policing bases)
- 44 other police buildings
- 20 buildings within the HQ complex
- 112 properties in total in addition to 12 partner bases

METHODOLOGY

- Assessed Blueprint accommodation requirements
- Identified buildings required for the foreseeable future
- Adopted 3 phased approach for remaining buildings (in close liaison with the Service Desk review)
 - Phase 1: Buildings already approved as surplus but not sold yet
 - Phase 2: Buildings recommended as surplus to requirement
 - Phase 3: Post Blueprint review of retained Estate in 2013/14
(Re-assess utilisation and further Partnership sharing opportunities)



Epping District – Police Buildings

- Epping Police Station
- Loughton Police Station
- Waltham Abbey Police Station
- Ongar Police Station

- Front Counter Provision:
 - Epping (open 12.00 to 6.00 pm Mon – Sat)
 - Loughton (open 12.00 to 6.00 pm Mon – Sat)
 - Waltham Abbey (Front Counter ceased from Nov 2011)
 - Ongar (Front Counter ceased from Nov 2011)



Essex Police analysed the footfall at all of our front counter locations for two weeks during November and December 2010.

- ***Loughton:* Averages 13 visits to the front counter per day, with 17% of these being after midnight.**
- ***Waltham Abbey:* Nearest alternative is Loughton @ 5.4 miles. Average 2.7 visits per day. Average 3 incoming telephone calls per day.**
- ***Ongar:* Average 5.5 visitors per day and 5 incoming telephone calls.**
- ***Epping:* Average 7.5 visits per day and 7 telephone calls.**



Epping District – Future of Police Buildings

- Epping, Loughton & Ongar police stations to be retained
- Waltham Abbey police station has previously been assessed for Partnership Sharing opportunities as part of our ongoing relationship with ECFRS and ECC – however there will be no further planning on this until post Olympics 2012, due to specialist Airwave Mast provision from this site



Operational Policing Command

- Response and Patrol will be borderless, rather than being restricted to geographical locations.
- Making best use of new technology, such as Mobile Data Tablets and Automatic Resource Location System.
- A new Tactical Support Group capable of rapidly responding to demand across the force.
- Building upon our established capabilities such as firearms, public order, CBRN, marine and Air Support.