

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Police and Crime Panel**  
held on Friday, 28th September, 2018 at Hough Village Hall, Cobbs Lane,  
Hough, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 5JN

### **PRESENT**

Councillors:

Cheshire East                      Councillors S Edgar, P Findlow and M Warren

Cheshire West & Chester      Councillors A Dawson, M Delaney and R  
Bisset

Halton                              Councillor N Plumpton Walsh

Independent Co-optees:      Mr R Fousert (Chairman) Mrs S Hardwick and  
Mr E Morris MBE.

Mr B Reed and Mr M Smith, Cheshire East Council.

### **18 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Brian Maher, Councillor Jan Davidson and Councillor Dave Thompson.

### **19 CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATION OF INTERESTS. RELEVANT AUTHORITIES (DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS) REGULATIONS 2012**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Two members of the public spoke at the meeting. Mrs and Mrs Bracey spoke raising concerns over the way in which both the Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner had managed a number of serious allegations made by their daughter and her husband. They also expressed concern at the way in which their complaint had been handled by Cheshire East Council. They sought assurance that the Panel would both review the complaint and the way in which it had been managed. The Chairman assured Mr and Mrs Bracey that the Panel would review the matter.

### **21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> June and 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were approved as a correct record.

## **22 SEVENTH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR PCPS AND PFCPS**

The Chairman asked those Panel members who wished to attend the Conference being held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November to inform the Secretariat.

## **23 CHESHIRE YOUTH COMMISSION GROUP MEETING - UPDATE**

Mrs Sally Hardwick briefed the Panel on her recent attendance at a meeting of the Cheshire Youth Commissioning Group, highlighting concerns at the cost of the Group and how representative it was of young people across the county. Panel members, including Mrs Hardwick, recognised the difficulty in creating a truly representative body and there was agreement this was an issue which should be discussed with the Commissioner, in detail, at an informal meeting.

## **24 UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS**

This item was introduced by Brian Reed, Cheshire East Council's Head of Democratic Services and Governance. He summarised the process that was followed by the Monitoring Officer when a complaint was received and provided a statistical summary of complaints received from 1 January 2017 to 31 August 2018.

Councillor Findlow sought clarification over how other Police and Crime Panels managed the complaints process and asked that research be undertaken on this issue. Councillor Dawson, making reference to the complaint raised earlier in the meeting by Mr and Mrs Bracey, expressed his dissatisfaction with the lack of clarity and transparency surrounding the process. There was agreement that a special meeting of the Panel should be convened to discuss the Panel's approach to the handling of complaints and to enable them to gain a better understanding of the legal background. The Secretariat was asked to canvass for dates.

## **25 CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017/18**

The Chairman welcomed the Commissioner to the meetings.

The Commissioner introduced a draft of his Annual Report, highlighting a number of areas including a reduced level of expenditure on his expenses and savings in running costs for his office, allowing more money to be spent on front line policing. He commented on the fact that crime was on the increase and was also becoming ever more complex. He also made reference to reduced levels of budget available to him at a time of austerity.

The Commissioner highlighted success in the rollout of his approach to community policing, including the provision of a PCSOs to each

community. He also noted the success in the rollout of handheld technology to Officers. He thanked the Panel for the support he had received from them, making particular reference to issue of crime data integrity, which had been discussed with Panel members on a number of occasions over the previous year.

Councillor Andrew Dawson sought clarification from the Commissioner over how he should view the document; asking if it was a political document. The Commissioner responded by saying that it was a factual document, but one that was underpinned by his values. Councillor Dawson highlighted a section of the report which focused on savings in office expenditure, contrasting this to the fact that no reference was made in the Annual Report to the cost of the suspension of the Chief Constable and the associated costs related to the subsequent disciplinary hearing.

The Commissioner responding that indicating that overall expenditure on his Office had decreased by approximately £300,000 a year; this had included savings resulting from the removal of the provision of lease cars. He indicated that he would be publishing the full cost of the Chief Constable's disciplinary hearing, noting that due process had been followed at all times.

Turning to a separate issue, Councillor Dawson sought clarification over the issue of Police numbers. The Commissioner highlighted the work that had been undertaken in relation to the allocation of PCSOs and the changes that he had introduced. He noted the decrease in resources available nationally in the period since 2010.

Mr Evan Morris sought clarification over the status of the report; asking if the document being considered was a draft. He suggested that the report should make reference to the work of the Police and Crime Panel. The Commissioner indicated that the document was a draft and that he thought that it would be a good idea for reference to be made in the Annual Report to the work of the Panel.

Mr Bob Fousert asked the Commissioner if he thought that some of the work he and his Office were involved in strayed a little outside of the remit of policing. The Commissioner indicated that one of the impacts of austerity over the last eight years had been changes in the resources available to many partner organisations. This had impacted on policing. He was of the view that modest investment from his Office in a wide range of organisations could have a significant impact on reducing levels of crime and anti social behaviour.

Councillor Paul Findlow made reference to the increase in reported Crime, asking how much of this was due to changes in the reporting mechanism. The Commissioner noted that this issue had been discussed at length at both Scrutiny meetings and at informal meetings of the Panel. He reaffirmed that some of the increase in reported crime had been due to changes in the method of reporting and that some of the increase could be

attributed to the impact of austerity. The Chairman noted that detailed statistical information had been circulated to Panel members following an informal meeting that had been attended by both the Commissioner and the Acting Chief Constable.

Councillor Andrew Bissett making reference to the points made earlier in the Meeting by Councillor Dawson, noted that the report referred to the period April 2017 to March 2018, so it was not surprising that it made no reference to the cost of the Chief Constable's Disciplinary hearing which had been referred to by Councillor Dawson. He commended the Annual Report to the public and encouraged them to read it when published. Councillor Andrew Dawson objected to the approach adopted by Councillor Bissett and asked that this be recorded in the Minutes.

Mr Evan Morris noted that nationally there was a trend for the Police to commission services that could lead to the reduction / prevention of crime.

## **26 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER - QUESTIONS FOR THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

Mrs Sally Hardwick, noting that the issue had been discussed earlier in the meeting (Item 6 discussed before the Commissioner was in attendance) asked the Commissioner for the cost of supporting the Youth Commission. The Commissioner indicated that the cost was about £20,000 a year. He noted that he had never appointed a Youth Ambassador, as his predecessor had, but that the cost of the Youth Commission was about two thirds the cost of the former Youth Ambassador. Those serving on the Youth Commission did so as volunteers and their work had directly led to policy changes. He indicated that the cost, effectiveness and membership of the Youth Commission was reviewed on an annual basis. The Commissioner thanked Mrs Hardwick for attending a meeting of the Commission.

Mr Bob Fousert referring to problems with the provision of forensic services, asked the Commissioner a number of questions, including where the money to support Key Forensic Services (KFS) had come from and how much this has cost the Cheshire Constabulary. The Commissioner indicated that there had been considerable discussion on these issues at a national level. He informed the Panel that he had signed off expenditure where a specific service has been commissioned by the Police in Cheshire. He indicated that he was not prepared to use public money to support a failing private sector company. He noted that in his view the national policy that had led to the abolition of the Forensic Science Service had been misguided. He had no issue with the competency of the staff who had been providing the service, the majority of whom appeared to have transferred to a new company who would provide a service in future. He was confident that a good quality service would be provided and that the previous failures had resulted from poor management and strategic leadership.

Mr Evan Morris asked if the Commissioner was considering reviewing the provision of a helicopter for the Police in Cheshire. The Commissioner responded by saying that Cheshire was part of the National Police Air Service, and paid for the service received based on the number of hours the aircraft was used. The Police service in Cheshire did not own its own aircraft. He had been keen to take part in a pilot exercise with the Fire and rescue Service over the use of a drone, but felt that such a machine could not replace access to an aircraft, although work was ongoing to see if more use could be made of drones.

Councillor Andrew Dawson sought clarification over the appointment of Miss Clare Hodgson to the post of Head of Finance. He noted that the Panel had conducted a Confirmation Hearing earlier in the year where they had recommend her appointment, but indicated that as she had no background working for a Police and Crime Commissioner, training and induction should be provided. The Commissioner responded by indicating that the appointment had been confirmed, she had yet to take up appointment, but would do so shortly. Training and a detailed induction would be provided.

Mr Bob Fousert asked the Commissioner about the timing of a Cheshire Constabulary Facebook posting relating to how the public could make a complaint about the Service and the timing of an attempted suicide by an Officer outside Police Headquarters. The Commissioner said that he saw no link between the two events, seeing it as important for the public to know that they could make complaints about the Police. He felt it inappropriate to comment in a public forum on the attempted suicide of an Officer. The Commissioner noted that whilst complaints were received, so too were compliments.

Mr Bob Fousert noted that the Commissioner was becoming more involved with the Fire and Rescue Service and asked if he intended to merge the two roles. The Commissioner responded by saying that whilst collaboration was important, he had been elected as a Police and Crime Commissioner and saw no immediate benefits in governance arrangements being merged. He had yet to hear a Government Minister justify such changes.

The Chairman thanked the Commissioner for attending the meeting.

## **27 SCRUTINY ITEMS**

No issues were raised.

## **28 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel's work programme was reviewed.

## **29 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as being on 14 December 2018.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.30 pm

Councillor Fousert (Chairman)