

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Police and Crime Panel**  
held on Wednesday, 20th June, 2018 at Safety Central, Cheshire Fire and  
Rescue Service, Cliff Lane, Lymm, Warrington WA13 0TE

**PRESENT**

Councillors:

Cheshire East                      Councillors S Edgar, P Findlow and M Warren

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

Warrington                        Councillor J Davidson.

Halton                                Councillors N Plumpton Walsh and P Lloyd  
Jones

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

Officers Present:

Mr B Reed, Ms S Antrobus and Mr M Smith, Cheshire East Council.

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Brian Maher and Councillor Dave Thompson. Councillor P Lloyd Jones attended in place of Councillor Thompson.

**2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2018/19 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Mr Robert Fousert was elected as Chairman for the 2018/19 Municipal year.

**3 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2018/19 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Councillor Andrew Dawson was elected as Deputy Chairman for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Three members of the public spoke at the meetings.

Mr Bracey and his daughter, Ms Jo Chang, spoke raising concerns over the way in which both the Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner had managed a number of complaints made by Ms Chang and her husband over alleged hate crimes. Mr Bracey sought confirmation from the Panel that they would ensure the complaints would be properly investigated. The Chairman assured Mr Bracey and Ms Chang that the Panel would do what it could within the constraints imposed on it by law.

Mr G Brine raised allegations that Cheshire Constabulary were making illegal charges in relation to the storage of motor vehicles. He expressed his frustrations that he was finding it very difficult to get the Constabulary, Commissioner or the Cheshire East Council Monitoring Officer to address his concerns.

## **6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2018 were approved as a correct record, with two minor corrections being made in relation to the attendance of Panel members representing Halton and Cheshire West and Chester Councils.

It was noted that the meeting of the Panel scheduled for April 2019 which would have fallen during the pre election period would be brought forward to Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March.

## **7 PANEL MEMBERSHIP 2018/19**

Panel membership for the 2018/19 Municipal Year was noted. The Chairman welcomed Councillors Davidson and Warren to the Panel.

## **8 PANEL ARRANGEMENTS - RULES OF PROCEDURE**

The Panel adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 2018/19 Municipal Year, noting that only very minor changes had been to the version adopted the previous year,, these related to the terms of office of the three independent members of the Panel.

Councillor Paul Findlow sought clarification over the way in which complaints were managed and reported to the Panel and asked that the Panel receive a regular, written update. Ms Suzanne Antrobus gave the Panel a brief verbal update on complaints, noting that she would provide further information to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman in accordance with the Panel's Procedure Rules.

## **9 CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL BUDGET 2018/19**

The Panel adopted a budget for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

## **10 INFORMAL MEETING DATES 2018/19**

It was noted that the Panel were waiting for the Commissioner to confirm dates for future informal meetings. The Chairman noted that at the last informal meeting there had been an agreement that future meetings would be themed, with each looking at a particular issue or subject. It was the view of the Panel that one or two informal meetings per year should be held in the late afternoon / early evening.

## **11 SCRUTINY ITEMS**

Scrutiny items were noted.

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

The Chairman welcomed the Commissioner to the meeting and thanked him for organising the informal meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June which had also been attended by the Acting Chief Constable.

The Commissioner congratulated Mr Bob Fousert on being elected as Chair of the Panel and Councillor Andrew Dawson on being elected as Deputy Chairman. He also passed on his good wishes to the Panel's former Chairman, Councillor Howard Murray, who was no longer a Panel member.

The Commissioner noted that the rollout of his local Policing model was going well and that this would be completed by the end of July. A "Mini Policing" programme had recently been launched in Halton, with the objective of involving young people in policing and engendering civic pride. If successful he hoped that the initiative would be rolled out more widely across the county. He congratulated the local PCSO in Halton who had developed the concept. In reviewing recent events the Commissioner noted the very high profile Royal visit to Halton and Chester, the policing of which had required a very significant input from Cheshire Constabulary.

Councillor Robert Bisset expressed concern at the very low detection rates in Cheshire for cases of burglary and sought reassurance that efforts were being made to improve rates of detection. The Commissioner agreed that this was a serious issue, noting that feedback from victims was that burglaries could have a profound effect on them. He offered to provide the Panel with more detailed information, broken down by Council area. He suggested that this important and complex issue could perhaps be addressed in more detail at an informal meeting. He assured the Panel that burglaries were given a high priority by the Constabulary. Councillor Mick Warren asked if the information provided could be broken down by category (commercial, domestic and non dwelling). The Commissioner agreed to do this.

Mr Evan Morris expressed concerns that there appeared to be no systematic approach in Cheshire to the issue of restorative justice, an issue that had been briefly discussed at the informal meeting that the Panel had held with the Commissioner and Acting Chief Constable earlier in the month. The Commissioner noted that restorative justice had an important role to play and that he commissioned a local service from a national supplier (Remedy). However, he agreed with Mr Morris that more could be done and that restorative justice could make a very positive contribution on occasions where the conventional criminal justice system had failed. Mr Morris asked if the Commissioner would share performance data with the Panel, which the Commissioner agreed to do.

Councillor Lloyd Griffiths asked the Commissioner for an explanation of "Outcome 16", in the context of the outcomes to offences. The Commissioner explained that this related to cases where there were evidential issues with an offence, frequently when the victim, having reported an offence, choose not to proceed with the complaint.

Councillor Lloyd Griffiths asked the Commissioner for information on the recently created Anti Stalking Unit. The Commissioner provided some background to the creation of the Unit; noting the growth in reported cases of stalking across the United Kingdom. The majority of victims were female. The new Unit, which included a senior Police Officer, involved working with partners, including the Suzy Lamplugh Trust and the NHS. The approach being employed was a "whole system" one, focused on supporting victims and cutting reoffending. Cheshire had been successful in attracting Home Office funding for the initiative and was at the forefront of work nationally.

Mrs Sally Hardwick, noting that this issue at been discussed at the informal meeting, expressed concern as to why there was no "Resolved" category in relation to crime statistics. The Commissioner agreed that this was unfortunate, but noted that the categories used were imposed on Police Forces and were applied nationally by Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMRC).

Councillor Andrew Dawson raised the issue of disparities in the allocation of PCSOs, noting that the populations of wards varied very significantly across Cheshire. The Commissioner outlined the process that he had followed in reallocating PCSOs, noting that there was no perfect allocation and that operational deployment was the responsibility of the Police. He noted that detailed work on the populations served had been undertaken by the Constabulary and agreed that this would be shared with the Panel in time for the September meeting of the Panel.

Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh asked the Commissioner if it would be possible to introduce a system where people were not charged for doctors notes in cases of domestic violence; noting that victims were frequently deprived of money by perpetrators.. With reference to Domestic Violence the Commissioner noted that overall funding to support domestic violence

was under threat across the country, highlighting issues with Housing Benefit and hostel provision. He indicated that he was attempting to address the issue in a number of ways. With reference to the cost of doctor's notes he agreed that this was symptomatic of a wider funding issue. Mrs Sally Hardwick informed the Panel that she had written to her MP about the issue of doctors notes and had received a reply that the issue could not be addressed at present as it would require a renegotiation of GPs contracts.

Mr Evan Morris noted that there had been a surge in alcohol related cases of domestic abuse during the football World Cup four years ago; he asked if there were any plans for a communications campaign in advance of the forthcoming World Cup. The Commissioner noted the correlation between alcohol and domestic abuse, but said he was not aware of any forthcoming campaigns. However, he did note that a number of high profile sporting personalities had lent their support to anti Domestic Violence campaigns.

Councillor Paul Findlow asked what steps the Commissioner was taking to reduce sickness rates within the Constabulary. The Commissioner noted that this was a responsibility of the Acting Chief Constable, but that in his scrutiny of her and the Constabulary it was issue on which he focused considerable attention. Work was ongoing on a range of initiatives which would, it was hoped, reduce levels of sickness. The Commissioner encouraged Councillor Findlow and other members of the Panel to attend Scrutiny meetings which were held in public. Councillor Lloyd Griffiths asked the Commissioner if return to work interviews were conducted within the Constabulary, the Commissioner indicated that they were. He also noted the importance of a comprehensive welfare approach to sickness

Councillor Paul Findlow made reference to the rise in reported crime in Cheshire, asking the Commissioner to explain the background to this. The Commissioner noted that it had been unfortunate that Councillor Findlow had been unable to attend the recent informal meeting where the issue of crime statistics had been discussed in great detail. He noted that much of the increase was due to the recent crime data integrity exercise, prompted from a work at a national level by HMRC.

### **13 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel's work programme was reviewed.

### **14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Panel would be held at Hough Village Hall on Friday 28 September 2019.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and concluded at 5.25 pm

Mr B Fousert (CHAIRMAN)