

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Police and Crime Panel**  
held on Wednesday, 8th January, 2020 at The Council Chamber, Warrington  
Town Hall

**PRESENT**

Cheshire East Council	Councillors A Critchley, D Murphy and JP Findlow
Cheshire West and Chester Council	Councillors A Dawon, M Delaney and R Bisset
Halton	Councillor N Plumpton Walsh
Warrington	Councillors J Davidson and B Maher
Independent Co-optees	Mr B Fousert, Mr E Morris (Chairman) and Mrs S Hardwick
Officers	Mr A Ibrahim, Mr B Reed and Mr M Smith (Secretariat Cheshire East Council)

**32 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mick Warren (Cheshire East Council) who was substituted by Councillor Denis Murphy and Councillor Dave Thompson (Halton Council).

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**34 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public present at the meeting choose to speak.

**35 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting were reviewed.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 be approved as a correct record.

## **36 COMPLAINTS SUB COMMITTEE**

Membership of the Complaints Sub Committee was confirmed as Mr Evan Morris, Mrs Sally Hardwick Councillor Andrew Dawson, Councillor Paul Findlow and Councillor Brian Maher.

The Secretariat was asked to circulate the report that had been considered by the Panel at the meeting when the Sub Committee had been established, together with the relevant minute from that meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Secretariat would canvass dates for a meeting of the Sub Committee and would compile a database of all recent relevant complaints which would be reviewed by the Sub Committee.

## **37 EIGHTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR CHAIRS, MEMBERS AND SUPPORT OFFICERS OF POLICE AND CRIME PANELS AND POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANELS**

Councillors Norman Plumpton Walsh and Paul Findlow briefed the Panel on their attendance at the Conference, which they had both found to be useful and informative.

Panel members discussed the benefits of visiting other Panels to see how business was conducted.

The Chairman indicated that the Panel had received an invitation from the National Association of Police and Crime Panels to become members, there was now no membership fee for joining the Association. He also indicated that should the Panel become members he had been asked if he would be interested in joining the Executive Committee. The Panel saw benefits in becoming members and supported the Chairman, should he wish to apply to become an Officer of the Association.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel become members of the National Association of Police and Crime Panels.

## **38 STRATEGIC REVIEW OF POLICING**

This item was introduced by the Chairman, who had drafted a submission to the Strategic Review of Policing which was being conducted by the Police Foundation under the Chairmanship of Sir Michael Barber.

The Panel endorsed the approach being recommended by the Chairman. Councillor Andrew Dawson noted that clarity was needed in relation to the role and powers of Police and Crime Panels, commenting that the

Cheshire Panel's relationship with the two Commissioners it had worked with had been less than satisfactory.

The Chairman indicated that he favoured the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commissioner, along the lines of ones developed in other areas.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Head of Governance and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair finalise a submission to the Strategic Review of Policing; with a copy to be circulated to all Panel members.

**39 POLICE POLICY IN RELATION TO SUPPORT PROVIDED TO REMEMBRANCE DAY EVENTS**

The Chairman welcomed the Commissioner to the meeting.

Councillor Paul Findlow asked the Commissioner for clarification on Police policy in relation to the support provided to those organising Remembrance Day events. He noted that at relatively short notice the Police had, in 2019, announced changes to the levels of support that had traditionally been provided.

The Commissioner had reviewed the support provided in 2019, noting that 69 events had been held across Cheshire, in excess of 230 Police Officers and PCSOs had been on duty. Events had also been supported by members of the Special Constabulary.

Councillor Rob Bisset raised concerns over the experience in the Ellesmere Port and Neston areas in 2019. He stressed the role that remembrance events played in society and the importance of maintaining such traditions.

Councillor Andrew Dawson sought clarification over the charges that would be made for support in future years. Councillor Denis Murphy requested that the Commissioner use his influence to minimise those occasions when charges were made.

The Commissioner highlighted that there had been some issues in 2019 over arranging road closures; the responsibility for which rested with local authorities.

The Chairman asked the Commissioner to revisit this issue with the Chief Constable and also requested that the Police communicated at an early stage with local authorities in relation to events being held in November 2020. The Panel confirmed that it would revisit this issue at a future meeting.

#### 40 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Mr Evan Morris, referring to an article in the on line magazine Police Insight, asked the Commissioner if Cheshire Constabulary had a policy on the use of body-worn video.

The Commissioner responded by saying that he had been very supportive of the introduction of body-worn video in Cheshire. Its introduction appeared to have led to a reduction in the number of complaints received and afforded significant protection to Police Officers and PCSOs. The equipment had now been provided to all relevant Officers across the Constabulary. He saw guidelines for its use as being important and informed the Panel that the implementation of the policy was currently being reviewed. The Commissioner committed to sharing the outcome of that exercise with Panel members, when available. Mr Morris asked if the Cheshire policy had been published, noting that the policy developed by the Metropolitan Police had been published and was available online. The Commissioner promised to take this issue up with the Chief Constable.

Mrs Sally Hardwick referred to a newsletter that she had received from the Commissioner's Office in relation the precept for 2020/21; this had made reference to Police recruitment. Mrs Hardwick sought clarity over the additional number of Police Officers that would be recruited and the timescales associated with the process.

The Commissioner indicated that the issue was complex. Due to the General Election no announcement had yet been made on the levels of national funding for 2020/21. He was currently consulting over plans for his precept for 2020/21. The Commissioner indicated that he had authority to recruit up to 30 Officers by April 2020 and a further 60 by April 2011. However; funding had not yet been provided by central Government, its receipt was dependent on Officer numbers being maintained at current levels. The Commissioner indicated that should the funding settlement not include an element for inflation, cost pressures of £6m would be placed on the Constabulary budget. The Chairman offered the Commissioner the Panel's support in lobbying for fair funding for the Cheshire Constabulary.

Councillor Denis Murphy noted that in his area (Congleton) a number of PCSOs had been promoted to positions of Police Officers. He asked what plans were in place to ensure PCSO numbers were maintained. The Commissioner responded by saying that there were plans were in place to replace those that had moved on to new roles.

Mr Bob Fousert asked the Commissioner how information about his proposed budget had been circulated. He replied that information had been circulated in a number of ways and was available online. He noted

that nine public consultation events were being held. The Chairman encouraged Panel members to attend these events.

Councillor Andrew Dawson made reference to a complaint which he had forwarded to the Commissioner, recognising that this would be dealt with through the appropriate channels, but asked what the Commissioner's expectations were of the Chief Constable and Constabulary in relation to race and racial profiling.

The Commissioner indicated that he expected the Police to act impartially at all times, noting that he and his office monitored complaints very carefully. He reminded Panel members that it was likely that changes would shortly be made to the Police Complaints procedure which could see his responsibilities increase.

Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh raised the issue of knife crime, commenting on the excellent work in combatting the problem that was being undertaken in the Halton Policing Unit. On behalf of the Panel he extended the Panel's sympathies to the family of Alex Rodda who had been murdered in December 2019. The Commissioner added his sympathies to those of the Panel. Mr Evan Morris sought re-assurance from the Commissioner that the good practice of the "Drop the Knife, not your life" campaign co-designed with young people in Halton was being rolled out across Cheshire. The Commissioner confirmed that it was, with the work being led by an Acting Superintendent. He indicated that Cheshire had not been successful in receiving Government funding for work in this area, but was learning from those police forces that had received additional funding.

Mr Bob Fousert, making reference to a recently published HMRC national report, asked the Commissioner about crime suffered by older people and the related issue of adult safeguarding. He was concerned that no performance data was published in relation to crimes against the elderly. The Commissioner responded, saying that crimes were categorised by crime type, not by the age of the victim. Mr Evan Morris noted that 23 percent of the Cheshire population were over 65 years of age. Councillor Jan Davidson commented that much work had been done by other agencies to compile information on vulnerable people. The Commissioner informed the Panel that work was being undertaken within the Constabulary on the issue of vulnerability.

Councillor Paul Findlow asked the Commissioner how he held the Chief Constable to account in relation to prosecuting differing categories of crime. He commented that some types of crime appeared to be prioritised in different ways. The Commissioner responded by saying that it would not be appropriate for him to comment on operational Policing issues, but indicated that he did hold the Chief Constable to account in delivering his Policing plan. He noted that the level of resourcing available to the Police was an important factor and that the decrease in the number of Police

Officers over the last ten years had influenced the Constabulary's capacity to prosecute offenders.

#### **41 SCRUTINY ITEMS**

The Panel noted the agenda of the Commissioner's Scrutiny meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

The Chairman noted that the Commissioner now had a new website and that information was now easier to find.

#### **42 WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was noted.

Panel members indicated that they would be content for the programme of formal meetings for 2020/21 to follow that adopted in previous years. A draft programme would be brought to the next meeting for the Panel's consideration.

The Panel endorsed the importance of continuing with the practice of holding regular, informal meetings with the Commissioner. Panel Members suggested a number of areas which could beneficially be discussed at such meetings, these included diversity, adult safeguarding and performance.

#### **43 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel was confirmed as being held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February at Wyvern House, Winsford.