

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Cheshire Police and Crime Panel**  
held on Friday, 27th November, 2020

**PRESENT**

Councillors:

Cheshire East                      Councillors JP Findlow, L Jeuda and M Warren

Cheshire West and Chester      Councillors R Bisset and M Delaney

Halton                                Councillors N Plumpton Walsh and D Thompson

Warrington                         Councillors J Davidson and P Walker

Independent Co-optees            Mr B Fousert and Mrs S Hardwick

Officers:                             Mr B Reed, Mr M Smith and Mrs D Nickson,  
Cheshire East Council

**25 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr Evan Morris MBE, in his absence the meeting was chaired by the Panel's Deputy Chair, Councillor Dave Thompson.

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

Councillor Peter Walker, a newly appointed member of the Panel noted that he was a member of two Parish Councils, both of which sponsored Police Community Support Officers. Councillor Martyn Delaney indicated that he was a member of the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

**27 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public had expressed a wish to participate in the meeting.

**28 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

Councillor Paul Findlow sought clarification over the creation of a group to review such things as how the Panel considered Scrutiny items (item 10 on the meeting's agenda). The Secretariat clarified that it was the Chairman's intention for the task and finish group that it was proposed be established to discuss a memorandum of understanding with the Commissioner (minute 32 below), should also consider this related issue.

## **29 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In the Chair's absence Councillor Dave Thompson noted that both Councillor Brian Maher (Warrington Council) and former Councillor Andrew Dawson (Cheshire West and Chester Council) had left the Panel. Councillor Maher had been replaced by Councillor Peter Walker and Councillor Dawson by Councillor Lynn Riley, although formal notification in relation to Councillor Riley had not yet been received by the Panel's Secretariat.

### **RRESOLVED**

That the Panel write to Councillor Brian Maher and Mr Andrew Dawson to express their gratitude for their work as Panel members over many years.

The Panel confirmed that it wished to see the reinstatement of the informal meeting with the Commissioner that had been postponed earlier in the month. The Panel reaffirmed its commitment to such meetings, which were seen as a very useful way of developing its relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Thompson welcomed the Commissioner's introduction of an anti-bullying policy, suggesting that Panel members brought the initiative to the attention of their own local authorities.

## **30 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE**

Mrs Sally Hardwick had been appointed as Chair and Councillor Martyn Delaney Vice Chair of the Sub – Committee at the previous meeting of the Panel. Councillors Paul Findlow, Peter Walker, Norman Plumpton Walsh, Dave Thompson and Jan Davidson were appointed as the five remaining members of the Sub - Committee.

## **31 SUBMISSION TO STAGE 1 OF THE HOME OFFICE REVIEW INTO POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS**

This item had been deferred from the previous meeting. Due to the deadline for submissions, the Chairman, Mr Evan Morris had made a personal submission to the Review, having first informally circulated it to Panel members for comment.

Councillor Paul Findlow made reference to the abolition of the Fire Authority which was, by inference, referred to in the submission made by the Chairman. He noted that this was an issue that had never been discussed by the Panel. For the sake of clarity, the Panel asked the Secretariat to write to the review team to explain that the Cheshire Panel had not discussed this issue. The Panel endorsed the wider, comprehensive document drafted by the Chair, thanking him for the work that he had done.

### **32 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

Councillor Dave Thompson explained that some months ago he and the Chairman had met with the Commissioner to discuss a range of issues, including the Panel's relationship with the Commissioner and his Office. He noted that in Lincolnshire a detailed Memorandum of Understanding had been developed and agreed by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Lincolnshire Panel. It was his and the Chair's view that this document could possibly become the basis for a similar arrangement for Cheshire.

#### **RESOLVED**

A five-member Working Group be established to develop a draft Memorandum of Understanding with the Commissioner, together with proposals for how the Panel consider issues such as the Commissioner's scrutiny of the Chief Constable. Membership of the Group would be Mrs Sally Hardwick (Chair) and Councillors Peter Walker, Paul Findlow, Rob Bissett and Laura Jeuda.

### **33 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

The Deputy Chairman welcomed the Commissioner to the meeting. The Commissioner congratulated the two newly appointed members on their joining the Panel.

The Commissioner updated the Panel on a range of issues, including Coronavirus, the commitment made by members of the Special Constabulary, regular Officers and Police staff in working through difficult times and the community projects that he was supporting through his Safer Communities fund. He outlined the progress made with the rollout of named Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers and community Police bases for each of the 122 communities across Cheshire, these broadly equated to local authority Wards. He welcomed the Panel's support for his anti-bullying strategy. The Commissioner also provided the Panel with details of improvements made to the Cheshire Constabulary Occupational Health Service, noting the increased focus on mental health. He also updated the Panel on his activities on White Ribbon Day and his

work more generally to combat domestic abuse. Concluding his introductory comments, he noted the forthcoming spending review and that he would shortly be commencing consultation on the Police precept for 2021/22.

Members of the Police and Crime Panel questioned the Commissioner on a wide range of issues, including:

**Councillor Laura Jeuda:**

- Domestic violence and in particular the number of women murdered by men who were known to them.
- The number of women who suffered abuse in Cheshire who were already known to the Police. The Commissioner committed to providing the Panel with more detailed information on this issue.
- In the context of the overall recruitment of new Officers, clarification on whether Special Constables counted towards the overall increase in the establishment. The Commissioner confirmed that they did not.

**Councillor Martyn Delaney:**

- The time the Chief Constable took to providing information requested by the Commissioner at his scrutiny meetings. The Commissioner noted that a detailed action log was kept and that normally information was provided within a month.

**Councillor Peter Walker:**

- Ongoing Constabulary policy in relation to those Police Community Support Officers who were funded by Parish Councils. The Commissioner responded by saying that he would not wish to return to an arrangement where Parish Councils part funded PCSOs, noting that his current policy did not preclude one or more Parish Councils fully funding the cost of a PCSO. The Commissioner indicated that he would welcome feedback from Parish Councils over how his newly introduced community policing arrangements were working.

**Mr Bob Fousert:**

- The timetable for the rollout of the outstanding strands of the Commissioner's anti-bullying strategy. These related to the workplace and the elderly. The Commissioner indicated that the workplace phase would start in the near future. Work on the strand relating to the elderly was likely to commence in 2022.

### **Councillor Dave Thompson**

- The importance of innovation to the work of the Constabulary, congratulating them on their proposed use of a “therapy dog” in an attempt to help engage with difficult to communicate to groups, including people with mental health problems. The Commissioner thanked Councillor Thompson for his comments.

### **Councillor Paul Findlow**

- The issue of crime data accuracy, which he recognised went back a long way to the days when he had served on the former Police Authority. He also noted the significant staffing requirements necessary for this work to be undertaken correctly. The Commissioner indicated that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken on this over recent years and that this had been validated by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. The Commissioner told the Panel that this was an issue which was constantly on his scrutiny agenda. He was confident that in the context of data accuracy the Constabulary had the appropriate levels of staff.
- The issues covered in Part II (with press and public excluded) at his scrutiny meetings with the Chief Constable. The Commissioner committed to sharing confidential issues with the Panel, so long as confidentiality was observed; he saw his informal meetings with the Panel as a useful vehicle for sharing such information.
- Progress with the next tranche of recruitment of new Police Officers. The Commissioner updated the Panel on progress, noting that nationally things were not moving as quickly as he would have hoped.

### **Mrs Sally Hardwick**

- The need for the Panel to come to a view on the future of Fire Authorities.

## **34 SCRUTINY ITEM**

The Panel noted the Scrutiny Board minutes. The Deputy Chairman suggested that consideration of scrutiny items would be better placed further up the agenda, so that they were considered before the attendance of the Commissioner.

**RESOLVED**

That future agendas be organised to include consideration of scrutiny items before the attendance of the Police and Crime Commissioner at the meeting.

**35 WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was noted.

**RESOLVED**

That future agendas be organised to include consideration of the Work Programme before the attendance of the Police and Crime Commissioner at the meeting.

**36 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Friday 5 February 2021 at 10.00am.