

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Police and Crime Panel**
held on Friday, 11th June, 2021 at Council Chamber, Wyvern House, The
Drumber, Winsford CW7 1AH

PRESENT

Councillors:

Cheshire East: Councillors J Paul Findlow, Denis Murphy, and
Mick Warren

Cheshire West & Chester: Councillors Robert Bisset, Martyn Delaney and
Lynn Riley

Halton: Councillors Martha Lloyd Jones and Peter
Lloyd Jones

Warrington: Councillors Kenneth Critchley and Jane
Whalen

Independent Co-optees: Mr Bob Fousert, Mrs Sally Hardwick and Mr
Evan Morris MBE

Officers: Mr Martin Smith, Cheshire East Council

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh
(Halton) and Councillor Laura Jeuda (Cheshire East).

2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED:

That Mr Evan Morris be elected as Chair of the Panel for the 2021/22
Municipal year.

**3 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL
YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Rob Bissett be elected as Deputy Chair of the Panel for
the 2021/22 Municipal year.

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

No issues were raised.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public speakers.

6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Panel meeting 12th March 2021

Councillor Riley sought clarification over the answers to a number of questions put to the former Commissioner that were outstanding from the meeting. The Secretariat confirmed that written responses had been received from the Commissioner's Office and had been circulated the day before by email. Printed copies were available for Panel members.

RESOLVED

That the minutes be approved.

7 PANEL MEMBERSHIP 2021/22

The Panel noted the nominations made by the constituent Councils for the 2021/22 Municipal year, they also noted the need to appoint members to the Complaints Management Sub Committee; including the Chair and Deputy Chair.

Councillors Martha Lloyd Jones (Halton), Kenneth Critchley and Jane Whalen (Warrington) were welcomed to the Panel by fellow Panel members. The Panel thanked Councillors Dave Thompson, Peter Walker and Mrs Jan Davidson for the work that they had done as Panel members and wished them well for the future. It was noted that Councillor Dave Thompson, the Panel's former Deputy Chair was now the Deputy Leader of Halton Council. The Chair congratulated Cllr Martyn Delaney on this appointment as Lord Mayor of Chester.

Panel members recognised the importance of both induction training for new members and ongoing training of all Panel members, noting that the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner had agreed to continue with the practice of holding informal meetings with Panel members, some of which could take the form of training and awareness raising events.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the nominations made by the four constituent Councils be noted.

- (ii) That following the meeting nominations for membership of the Complaints Management Sub Committee would be agreed, with proportionality being three Labour, two Conservative, one independent and one co-opted member.
- (iii) That Mrs Sally Hardwick be appointed as Chair of the Complaints Management Sub Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal year and Councillor Martyn Delaney appointed as Deputy Chair.
- (iv) That opportunities for both the induction of new Panel members and the ongoing training of all members would be taken up during the year.

8 INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

The Panel had three independent co-opted members each of whom were appointed for a three-year term. At the Panel's annual meeting in 2020 it had been resolved that due to the pandemic and the uncertainty it had created, all three independent co-opted members should have their term of office extended for a further twelve months. Mr Bob Fousert's term of office, which had been due to expire on 30th September 2020 was now due to expire on 30th September 2021.

Panel members recognised the very significant contribution that Mr Bob Fousert had made to the Panel over a number of years and encouraged him to reapply for Panel membership.

RESOLVED

That a proportionate recruitment Panel consisting of four members (Mr Evan Morris and Councillors Martyn Delaney, Lynn Riley and Jane Whalen) be appointed to lead the recruitment process and make recommendations to the Panel over the membership of an independent co-opted member.

9 DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE COMMISSIONER

Mrs Sally Hardwick introduced this item, outlining the work which the working group (which she chaired) had undertaken; this had resulted in the production of a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which had been shared with Panel members for comment earlier in the year. The Chair briefed the Panel on his experience of visiting the North Wales Police and Crime Panel and also the practice in a number of other areas where MoU's had been developed or were in the process of being drafted.

Panel members were supportive of the principle of introducing a MoU, seeing the initiative as being one that would lead to better scrutiny of the Commissioner and assist the Commissioner in his work.

RESOLVED

That the draft Memorandum of Understanding be endorsed as a basis for formal discussions with the Police and Crime Commissioner, with the discussions being led by Mrs Evan Morris and Mrs Sally Hardwick with support from the Panel's Secretariat.

10 PANEL ARRANGEMENTS: RULES OF PROCEDURE

Councillor Paul Findlow sought clarification as to the position should it be necessary to appoint a new Police and Crime Commissioner between elections. The Secretariat agreed to research this issue and report back to Panel members.

RESOLVED

- (i) The Panel adopt the Rules of Procedure, as published, for the 2021/22 Municipal year.
- (ii) The Head of Democratic Services and Governance be given authority to make changes to the Rules of Procedure during the year to give effect to the wishes of the Panel.

11 REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

Mrs Sally Hardwick introduced this item reviewing the work of the Complaints Management Sub Committee, which she had chaired since its creation late in 2020. She noted the desirability of amending the wording on the Panel's page of the Cheshire East website, to provide greater clarity over the nature of the complaints that can be considered by the Panel.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the summary of complaints considered with by the Complaints Management Sub Committee since its creation be noted.
- (ii) That the Secretariat be authorised to amend the Panel's page of the Cheshire East website to provide greater clarity.

12 LOCAL AUTHORITY REMOTE MEETINGS - CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The Chair introduced this item by outlining the process that the Government were going through to consult on the longer-term options for remote meetings. The provisions of the Coronavirus Act which had allowed for remote public meetings to be held had expired and as a consequence remote meetings were no longer lawful.

Panel members expressed the desire to see the facility for remote meetings to continue, but also saw it as being desirable for the Panel to be able to hold hybrid meetings, where some of those participating could access the meeting remotely, with others meeting in a central location. Some Panel members recognised the benefits of holding face to face meetings.

It was noted that individual Panel members could if they wished make personal submissions to the consultation.

RESOLVED

That the Secretariat make a submission to the consultation on behalf of the Panel.

13 CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL BUDGET 2021/22

The Panel discussed the proposed budget for 2021/22. It was noted that the cost of webcasting would be slightly higher than indicated in the report as further information and revised costings had been received from Cheshire West and Chester Council who webcast the Panel's meetings. The Secretariat were of the view that the webcasting service provided by Cheshire West and Chester represented excellent value for money.

Councillor Murphy queried whether the amount of money allocated to room hire, training, conferences and membership of a regional group would be sufficient, especially as the Panel had committed to providing training for newly appointed members. The Secretariat confirmed that much training could be delivered at little or no cost. Councillor Findlow sought clarification over the Panel's membership of a regional group, something which he favoured; the Chair confirmed that Frontline Consulting, who organised a number of regional groups and a national conference, would shortly be creating a North West regional group for Police and Crime Panels; the cost of joining would be small, but was not yet known.

RESOLVED

That the Panel budget for 2021/22 be approved.

14 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted. The Secretariat confirmed that discussions were ongoing with the Commissioner's Office over a programme of informal meetings.

The Commissioner had indicated that he would be unable to attend a meeting on Friday 17th September, the Panel agreed to the meeting being put back until Friday 24th September.

15 WELCOME TO THE NEWLY ELECTED POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Chair welcomed Mr John Dwyer to the meeting, congratulating him on his election to the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire. He also thanked Mr David Keane, the outgoing Commissioner for the work he had undertaken during his five years in office.

The Commissioner outlined his priorities for his term of office, which would only be three years. He noted that he planned to appoint a Deputy Commissioner. The Commissioner informed the Panel that he had moved the Commissioner's Office from Stockton Heath to Police HQ in Winsford.

He announced that he had launched a Community Action Fund of £100,000, with bids of up to £5,000 being accepted. Those bidding would need to secure matched funding. He also briefed the Panel on success in achieving Safer Streets funding from the Home Office and on his intention to appoint volunteers as Police Auxiliaries.

16 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

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

Mr Bob Fousert:

- Noted the commitment of the new Chief Constable of Greater Manchester to devote more resources to issues such as burglaries and to his commitment to see his officers smartly turned out. He asked the Commissioner for his views on these issues.

The Commissioner confirmed that Cheshire's new Chief Constable would adopt a similar approach. He expressed dissatisfaction with current detection rates for offences such as burglary and promised a significant improvement in the way in which crime was dealt with in Cheshire.

Cllr Paul Findlow:

- Sought clarification over the Commissioner's plans for enforcing speeding in Cheshire, particularly in rural areas. The Commissioner responded by saying he was committed to addressing this issue and that work was being undertaken to develop a comprehensive approach. This would be shared with the Panel, probably at an informal meeting. Mr Evan Morris, the Panel's Chair welcomed this approach.

- Asked if the Commissioner's Office could publish reports for issues discussed at Scrutiny Meetings at the same time as the agenda, not weeks later as was the current practice. The Commissioner agreed to take this issue up with his staff.

Cllr Martha Lloyd Jones:

- Sought clarification over whether the Commissioner would be prepared to work with local authorities over Safer Streets funding. He indicated that he wished to work with all local authorities and all of Cheshire's Members of Parliament.

Cllr Martyn Delaney:

- Sought clarification over the Commissioner's move to Police HQ, asking if any cost savings had been identified. The Commissioner responded by saying that it had been illogical for the previous Commissioner to have moved the Office to Stockton Heath. He had moved back to Police HQ on his first day in post and his staff had also moved. Such a move would have associated costs, these were not yet known, but in his opinion, it was vital that he was co-located with the Chief Constable.

Cllr Lynn Riley:

- Sought the Commissioner's view as to how he would hold the Chief Constable to account over issues such as partnership working with local authorities and such things as the enforcement of speed limits. She noted that all four Cheshire Council's had invested heavily on such things as 20 mph zones, but that speeding in more rural areas was an issue. She also highlighted issues of rural crime more generally.

The Commissioner stressed the importance of partnership working, especially with local authorities. He gave the example of speed limit signs that were obscured or difficult to read, maintenance of such signs was a local authority responsibility, but poor maintenance created enforcement issues for the Police.

Mr Evan Morris:

- Asked the Commissioner if he was confident that community safety partnerships across Cheshire were delivering against key objectives. The Commissioner indicated that he planned to meet with the local authority Chief Executives over this important issue.

Cllr Peter Lloyd Jones:

- Sought clarification over the operation of the fast track detective scheme in Cheshire and any impact the scheme had on overall

Police numbers. The Commissioner indicated that those wishing to become detectives had to apply to join the Police in the normal way and then serve as a uniformed officer for two years; at which point they could sit a crime examination. If successful they could become a detective and receive additional training in this specialism. Any decision on the number of detectives across the Constabulary would be taken by the Chief Constable, not by him. He had made a manifesto commitment to increase the overall establishment of Police Officers in Cheshire.

Cllr Rob Bissett:

- Asked how confident the Commissioner was that the Police would have the resources that they needed to address the wide range of issues facing them. The Commissioner repeated his comment made earlier in the meeting, that partnership working was essential and that the Police working in their own did not have the resources to address all the issues that they faced, many of which were not directly ones for the Police.