

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel

held on Friday 22 September 2017 in
The Karalius Suite, Halton Stadium, Widnes

PRESENT

Councillors:

Cheshire East	Councillors H Murray (Chairman), S Edgar and P Findlow
Cheshire West & Chester	Councillors R Bisset, A Dawson and M Delaney
Warrington	Councillor B Maher
Halton	Councillors N Plumpton Walsh and D Thompson
Independent Co-optees:	Mrs S Hardwick, Mr R Fousert (items 4-8) and Mr Evan Morris (from item 5)
Officers:	Mr B Reed and Mr M Smith,

The Chairman indicated that unfortunately, due to illness, Mr David Keane, Police and Crime Commissioner was unable to attend. Whilst sending him their best wishes a number of Panel members expressed concern that the Commissioner would not be represented by his Deputy.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor A King.

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

Mrs S Hardwick declared an interest in item 5, the appointment of independent members of the Panel, noting that she would leave the room during discussion of that item.

3. Public Participation

There were no members of the public in attendance.

The Chairman, via the webcast of the meeting, encouraged members of the public to both attend and submit questions in advance of future meetings.

4. Minutes of previous meetings

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 23 June 2017 were approved as a correct record; with two minor typographical errors being noted and corrected in the formal record.

Mrs Hardwick noted that she had recently attended a meeting at Police Headquarters in Winsford and had observed that the accommodation vacated by the Commissioner was still unoccupied.

Concern was expressed by a number of members of the Panel at the length of time that it had on occasion taken the Commissioner to respond to questions; including ones that had been submitted in writing, in advance of meetings. Councillor Dawson gave an example of a question submitted in advance of the meeting of the Panel held on 23 June to which he had received a reply the previous week. The Panel were of the view that a letter should be sent to the Commissioner expressing concern at the length of time replies to questions could take and recommending a timescale for responses.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioner be written to requesting that an initial response be received to questions within ten working days, and that if a full response would take longer an indication of the likely timescale be provided in the initial response.

Councillor Dawson noted that at the previous meeting he had asked that consideration be given to amending the Panel's Procedure Rules to enable the Chairman to limit excessively long answers to questions by the Commissioner. The Secretariat was asked to research this issue; looking at best practice from other Police and Crime Panels and report back to the next meeting.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel (Confirmation Hearing for the Commissioner's Chief of Staff) held on 12 July 2017 were approved as a correct record.

Having declared an interest, Mrs S Hardwick left the meeting during consideration of the following item. Mr R Fousert; who had not been present for item 2 also left the room.

5. Appointment of Independent Members

The Panel noted the process that had been followed by the Recruitment Panel appointed in January which had led to recommendations being made over the

appointment of a new independent member and the reappointment of Mr R Fousert and Mrs S Hardwick.

RESOLVED

That Mr Evan Morris MBE be appointed as a member of the Panel to serve until 30 September 2019, and Mr Robert Fousert be reappointed to the Panel to serve until 30 September 2020 and Mrs Sally Hardwick reappointed to serve until 30 September 2021.

6. Police and Crime Panels (PCPs) – Consultation on proposals for national representation

Notification had been received that Councillor Tim Hutchings, Chairman of the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel had over recent months been coordinating discussion on the subject of a national representative body for PCPs. The Panel welcomed these discussions and discussed the range of options that were available; taking the view that creating a Special interest group of the Local Government Association would be the most sensible way forward, at least in the short term.

RESOLVED

That the following be submitted as the Panel's response to the consultation:

"With regard to the proposals for a national representative body for PCPs, Cheshire PCP considers that a Special Interest Group (SIG) within the LGA is likely to be a more effective first step.

PCPs can often see a rapid turnover of political representation, which may prove difficult when giving life to an Association. It is considered beneficial that professional decision makers in the public sector have their own Associations. However, PCP members are scrutineers and not decision makers charged with developing policy positions and shaping services. The PCP receives good sources of reference information and has even received direct consultations for consideration, in the past. There are also means by which PCP members across the country can come together to network, such as conferences etc.

It is suggested that contact be made with central Government to ascertain whether the formation of such an Association would be welcomed and if so, what degree of interaction central Government would expect to give to supporting and listening to such a body.

It is considered that a SIG, under the umbrella of the LGA, would better facilitate an evolutionary process towards a full Association of Police and Crime Panels (APCP), should that position be reached. A SIG within the LGA, providing support, continuity and design, aligned to the question of Government willingness towards a formalised APCP could provide a more robust foundation."

7. Overview and Scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner – Questions for the Police and Crime Commissioner

In the absence of the Commissioner this item was deferred.

8. Work Programme

The Panel's work programme was noted.

The Secretariat was asked to contact the Commissioner's Office with a view to seeking a date when the Panel could reconvene to meet with the Commissioner, options for a reconvened meeting should include evenings.

Members of the Panel asked for the agenda for the meeting in December to include an update on complaints.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Panel would be held on Friday 1 December at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe.

The meeting was adjourned to a time when the Police and Crime Commissioner could attend.