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Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Police and Crime Panel**
held on Friday, 19th July, 2024 in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings,
Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Councillors:

Cheshire East: Councillors Steve Edgar and Judy Snowball

Cheshire West & Chester: Councillors Mike Jones and Keith Millar

Halton Councillors Martha Lloyd Jones and
Norman Plumpton Walsh

Warrington: Councillors Kuldeep Dhillon and
Bob Hignett

Independent Co-optees: Mr Evan Morris MBE, Mrs Gemma Shepherd – Etchells
and Miss Yasmin Somani

Officers: Mr Martin Smith, (Secretariat), Ms Jennie Summers
(Legal Services) and Ms Francis Handley
(Democratic Services and Governance)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Sam Naylor (Cheshire West and
Chester) and Cllr Rob Moreton (Cheshire East).

2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Mr Evan Morris was elected as Chair of the Panel for the 2024/25
Municipal Year.

3 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR FOR THE 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Miss Yasmin Somani was elected as Deputy Chair for the 2024/25
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 members of the public wishing to speak or ask questions.

6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2024 be approved.

7 PANEL MEMBERSHIP FOR 2024/25

It was noted that Warrington Council had notified the Panel's Secretariat that Cllr Bob Hignett had replaced Cllr Mark Browne as one of their nominated Panel members for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

The Panel discussed the membership of the Complaints Management Sub Committee for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED

That Mrs Gemma Shepherd Etchells and Cllr Keith Millar be appointed respectively as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Panel's Complaints Management Sub Committee, with the Panel's Secretariat instructed to liaise with Panel members following the meeting to allocate the remaining five places on the Sub Committee.

8 PANEL ARRANGEMENTS - PROCEDURE RULES

The Panel's Procedure Rules were noted and adopted for the Municipal year.

9 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT CO-OPTED MEMBER OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

The Panel noted that Miss Yasmin Somani's three-year term of office would come to an end on 30th September 2024.

RESOLVED

That as Miss Somani had been re-elected as the Panel's Deputy Chair, her term of Office as an independent co-opted member of the Panel will be extended for a further three years, until 30th September 2027, in line with the provisions of the Panel's Procedure Rules (Part 2, Section b).

10 POLICE AND CRIME PANEL BUDGET FOR 2024/25

The Panel's budget for 2024/25 was noted and approved.

11 PANEL'S WORK PROGRAMME

The programme of meetings for the coming municipal year was noted. Panel members were asked to let the Secretariat know of any issues that they would wish to discuss at either formal meetings of the Panel or at informal meetings held with the Commissioner.

12 WELCOME TO THE COMMISSIONER

The Chair welcomed the Commissioner to the meeting and congratulated him on his election.

13 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Commissioner made a presentation to the Panel, covering issues ranging from the development of his Police and Crime Plan, the appointment of a Deputy Commissioner on a job share basis, his proposed use of citizen assemblies and how during his time in office he would champion the interest of victims.

14 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSION

As was customary, the Panel had submitted a number of questions in writing to the Commissioner in advance of the meeting. The Commissioner informed the Panel that he had determined that the questions related to operational policing issues and had sought a written response from the Constabulary on each question. The responses that the Commissioner had received were circulated to the Panel and to members of the press and public in attendance and are attached to these minutes.

The Chair expressed his dissatisfaction with this approach to answering questions raised by Panel members. There was agreement that in advance of the next meeting of the Panel, a meeting would be held between the Commissioner and the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Panel, along with relevant officers, where the issue of questions to the Commissioner and their responses would be discussed.

The pre-submitted questions and the written response provided by the Commissioner are attached to these minutes.

Councillor Judy Snowball brought to the attention of the Commissioner a Resolution¹ that had been made by the Panel at its last meeting, this related to the recommendations of the Angolini Review, which had been established to uncover the circumstances and failures that led to the abduction, rape and murder of Sarah Everard by a police officer in 2021. The Commissioner indicated that he would be very carefully considering including the recommendations in his Police and Crime Plan, but at the current time could give no assurances over what would be included.

Panel members asked the Commissioner a range of further questions. Details of questions and the Commissioner's responses can be found on the Police and Crime Panel page of the Cheshire East Council website.

¹ That the incoming Police and Crime Commissioner be encouraged to include the 16 recommendations from the Angiolini Review in their new (2024 – 2028) Police and Crime Plan and that progress should be monitored through the Commissioner's Scrutiny meetings with the Chief Constable, with reports back to the Police and Crime Panel as appropriate.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

- 1) Commissioner, according to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who hold the live data, Burton Wood, Widnes and Runcorn have 512 registered XL bully dogs. This is one of the highest densities in the UK. Can the Commissioner inform me of how many attacks have been reported in Cheshire in the last twelve months?

Given the question relates to operational policing, I have sought a response from Cheshire Constabulary that is as follows:

There have been zero XL Bully Attacks during the period mentioned within Cheshire.

The Constabulary has a robust operational plan regarding XL Bullies, Operation Fibred.

To date, the Constabulary has seized 75 XL Bullies and finalised 22 prosecution cases within the Courts, with a further 14 cases being progressed to court.

A total of 27 XL Bullies have been euthanised.

- 2) The Cheshire Police and Crime Panel extend their congratulations to The Duke and Duchess of Westminster on their recent marriage and wish them every happiness in the future. The Panel would like to know the full cost to the Cheshire Constabulary of policing the event which was also supported by police officers from neighbouring forces in the lead up and on the day.

Given the continued very challenging fiscal situation faced by Cheshire Constabulary, the Panel would also like to know if the Grosvenor family were approached and asked to make a contribution to the cost in order to reduce the burden to the Cheshire community?

As the question relates to a specific policing operation, I have sought a response from Cheshire Constabulary that is as follows:

The full cost to the Constabulary is not yet known. Planning the event took over nine months and part of that planning was a robust financial plan to ensure all expenditure has been captured. The Constabulary is currently waiting for the final payroll runs to take place so it can accurately assess the financial impact.

There has been no formal approach to the Duke of Westminster regarding contributions made, following legal advice concerning NPCC Guidance for Special Policing Services (SPS). The central principle is that the police cannot charge for services which fall within their ordinary public duty (i.e. those services the police are duty bound to provide).

The policing response was to protect the public in a crowded space, that was Chester City Centre, and to complete our obligations with regards to protected persons (i.e. HRH The Prince of Wales) and those who were believed to be attending in the initial phase of the planning process (i.e HRH The King, HRH The Queen and HRH The Princess of Wales).

3) In relation to the recent wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Westminster, the Panel note that Just Stop Oil" effected a very serious 'Breach of the Peace, which took place in Chester. Can the Commissioner tell the Panel if an investigation has been undertaken into this lapse in security which led to the offence where protesters managed to expel two fire extinguishers in St Werburgh Street, filled with an unknown orange powder into the atmosphere, whilst the Duke and Duchess and Prince William were exiting the Cathedral.

Has there been an acceptance that this situation was an unacceptable security lapse which could have resulted in a much worse and more dangerous outcome for the Police Officers who bravely responded to the incident, the wedding guests and to the wider public who were in the vicinity? Further what action has been taken against the perpetrators? Was the substance that was expelled sampled for potential contamination due to the introduction a toxic or biological substances?

As the question relates to a specific policing operation, I have sought a response from Cheshire Constabulary that is as follows:

The Constabulary had a comprehensive and externally scrutinised policing plan in place. The plan was centred around ensuring public safety, the safety of those attending the wedding as formal guests and the safety of deployed Police Officers and Staff. Part of the plan included the use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) specialists, who were quickly (within 2 minutes) able to identify the substance as non-toxic.

As with all events of this nature, there is always the possibility of a large-scale public event being seen as a platform for various emotive campaigns and there is a fine balance within policing to allow protest activity to take place. It should be noted the individuals (ladies in their senior years), involved in this activity were in the general crowd of thousands, present on the streets of Chester, so how this could possibly be described as a security lapse is beyond me.

I can confirm that no members of the wedding party, public or police were injured or suffered any after effects. The public were extremely supportive of the event, as well as the policing style and tone throughout. Following the use of one adapted fire extinguisher, two people were immediately arrested at the scene and are currently under investigation for public order offences.

As is normal post operational practice, a full operational debrief was conducted and any identified learning shared within the Constabulary's internal Organisational Learning Board.

- 4) The Commissioner may be aware of the dismissal of the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire, Nick Adderley on the grounds that he falsely claimed military service, and had since 2009 worn on his Police uniform medals that he was not entitled to wear. The media has also brought to light that Mr Adderley is under investigation for his time in Staffordshire Constabulary, where it is alleged, he was involved in fraud in relation to vehicle maintenance. It has also been reported that he served in Cheshire Constabulary, working his way through the ranks to serve as a senior officer. Given recent events and the investigation ongoing in Staffordshire, can the Commissioner reassure the Panel that the Chief Constable is looking to see if there could have been any similar acts committed by Mr Adderley, when he applied to work in Cheshire, or whilst he served as a senior Police Officer in the county.

As the Panel will be aware, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire was not the Appropriate Authority for this matter. As such, I have sought a response from Cheshire Constabulary that is as follows:

The Force has supported the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) during its investigation and provided a range of material relating to Mr Adderley's application to, and time with, Cheshire Constabulary. There are currently no further matters or allegations being considered by the Force in relation this.

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