

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Police and Crime Panel**
held on Friday, 23rd June, 2017 at The Council Chamber, Warrington Town
Hall, Sankey Street, Warrington WA1 1UH

PRESENT

Cheshire East	Councillors H Murray, S Edgar and G Walton(Substitute)
Cheshire West & Chester	Councillors A Dawson, A Black and T Sherlock(Substitute)
Halton	Councillors N Plumpton Walsh and D Thompson
Warrington	Councillors A King and B Maher
Independent Co-optees:	Mrs S Hardwick and Mr R Fousert
Officers: Democratic Administration	Mr B Reed, Head of Governance and Services and Mr M Smith, Civic and Manager, Cheshire East Council

Also in attendance: Mr D Keane,
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Cheshire and Mrs E Lunn, Chief
Finance Officer, Office of the Police
and Crime Commissioner.

63 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor J P Findlow (Cheshire East Council),
Martyn Delaney (Cheshire West and Chester Council) and Robert Bisset
(Cheshire West and Chester Council).

64 TERM OF OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Noting that the Recruitment Panel appointed at the meeting on 3 February had
yet to complete its work, the Panel agreed to formally extend the terms of office of
the two remaining independent members until such time as the work of the
Recruitment Panel was complete and a report was made to the Panel, which
formally reappointed independent members.

RESOLVED

That the terms of office of Mr Robert Fousert and Mrs Sally Hardwick be formally extended until such a time as the Recruitment Panel had made recommendations to the Police and Crime Panel over the terms of office of independent members and had formally reappointed independent members.

65 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2017/18 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor Howard Murray (Cheshire East Council) was elected as Chairman for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

66 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2017/18 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Mr Robert Fousert (independent member) was appointed as Deputy Chairman for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

68 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2017 were submitted.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2017 be approved as a correct record.

69 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Lance Reah, a military veterans' peer mentor, who worked with ex servicemen who had become involved with the criminal justice introduced himself. He explained that he was attending the meeting to gain a better understanding of the work of the Panel. Mr Reah was welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman.

70 PANEL MEMBERSHIP 2017/18

The Panel received a report on the membership of the Police and Crime Panel for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

Councillor Dawson noted that the current Panel membership did not reflect the Council of Europe guidance as to gender balance, which suggested that at least 40 per cent of members on public bodies should be women. There was recognition from members of the Panel that such a balance would be desirable, but it was noted that this was made more difficult in the case of a body such as the Police and Crime Panel where the majority of members were appointed by constituent Councils. Councillor Dawson asked that members go back to their Councils and ask that the gender of those appointed to the Panel is considered in future years.

RESOLVED

That the membership of the Panel be noted.

71 APPOINTMENT TO VACANT POSITION OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE PANEL

Consideration was given to a report which updated the Panel on the progress that had been made with the appointment to the vacant position of independent member. Councillors Dawson and King (the two Councillor members of the Recruitment Panel) noted that good progress had been made, but that the calling of a General Election had caused a delay in the Recruitment panel's work. Interviews would be held on Friday 30 June, following which members of the Police and Crime Panel would be updated.

RESOLVED

The Panel noted the progress made with the appointment of a new member to replace Mr Eric Hodgson.

72 PANEL ARRANGEMENTS: RULES OF PROCEDURE

The Panel reviewed and adopted its Rules of procedure each year, it was noted that following the transfer of administrative responsibility for the Panel to Cheshire East Council in the summer of 2016, a major review of the Panel's Rules of Procedure had been undertaken. These had been approved by the Panel at its meeting on 23 September 2016.

The documents considered by the Panel contained a small number of minor amendments, incorporating changes agreed by the Panel since September 2016, together with small number of typographic corrections.

Councillor Dawson asked if the Panel could have access to the Complaints Procedure issued by the Host Authority's Monitoring Officer and referred to in paragraph 12.8.2. of the draft Rules of Procedure.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Panel Arrangements; Rules of Procedure be adopted for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.
- (ii) That the Complaints Procedure issued by the Host Authority's Monitoring Officer be circulated to members of the Panel in advance of the September meeting.

73 CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL BUDGET 2017/18

The Panel noted that a working outline budget had been developed for the 2017/18 Municipal Year and that this would provide a mechanism to enable Government Grant to be claimed at the end of the year.

RESOLVED

That the budget for the 2017/18 Municipal Year be approved.

74 INFORMAL MEETING DATES 2017/18

Consideration was given to the dates of informal meetings of the Panel for 2017/18. Councillor Thompson asked if some meetings could be held in the evening, noting that it was not always easy for Panel members who worked to take time off. The Panel were supportive of this suggestion.

RESOLVED

(i) That informal meetings be held on:

2 August 2017
1 November 2017
10 January 2018
7 March 2018

(ii) That the Police and Crime Commissioner be approached with a view to the August and March meetings being held in the evening.

75 SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOR POLICE AND CRIME PANELS

Consideration was given to attendance at the sixth annual Conference for Police and Crime Panels being held in Warwick on Monday 6 November 2017.

RESOLVED

That the Deputy Chairman represents the Panel at the Sixth Annual Conference for Police and Crime Panels.

76 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER - QUESTIONS FOR THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Commissioner provided the Panel with an update on the Cheshire Constabulary's response to the recent terrorist attacks. He noted that following the attack in Manchester on 22 May 2017 the national threat level had been raised to Critical for a short time; before returning to its current level of Severe.

In the days after the attack in Manchester there had been a number of high profile events in Cheshire, including a race meeting in Chester and a number of rugby matches. Additional resources had been deployed and feedback from the public was that they had been reassured by the higher profile Police presence. Assistance had also been provided to Greater Manchester Police and there had been a joint firearms response with the North Wales Police.

The Commissioner reassured the Panel that events across Cheshire over the summer would be risk assessed as necessary.

The Commissioner confirmed that a number of Decision Papers had been circulated following the last meeting of the Panel; these related to the appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and the relocation of his office to Stockton Heath.

Councillor Steve Egdar sought clarification over how many staff from Winsford had been made redundant as a result of the move to the Commissioner's Office to Stockton Heath. The Commissioner indicated that there had been no redundancies attributable to the office relocation.

Councillor Andrew Dawson asked the Commissioner if there were any additional papers related to either the appointment of the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner or the relocation of the Commissioner's Office to Stockton Heath. The Commissioner indicated that the papers that he had circulated had been comprehensive and provided detailed business cases. He noted that the papers provided did make reference to other documents that were already in the public domain.

Councillor Dawson sought further clarification over the appointment of the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, asking that if the Commissioner had declared his long standing association with former Councillor Dirrir as part of the recruitment process, this information was not included in the Decision paper that had been circulated.

The Commissioner responded by saying that he had followed due process and had been full and open at all stages of the recruitment process for a Deputy Commissioner and had declared his long standing association with Ms Dirrir. He stated that in his opinion he had gone well beyond the legal requirements when appointing his Deputy. He informed the Panel that the Deputy Commissioner was now in post as was doing an excellent job, especially in areas such as diversity and working with volunteers. Councillor Dawson noted that his own definition of "full and open" appeared to be different to the Commissioner's.

The Chairman invited the Commissioner to consider bringing important issues to the Panel in advance of decisions being taken, noting that this invitation had been made on a number of occasions in the past. The Commissioner noted that since the previous meeting of the Council he had improved communication with the Panel's Secretariat and Chairman; and that he welcomed the advice and views of the Panel.

Mrs Sally Hardwick indicated that she was concerned that the paperwork provided in relation to the move to Stockton Heath did not; in her opinion constitute a full business case. The Commissioner stated that in his view the Decision Paper that he had circulated was comprehensive, noting that he had not been prepared to do nothing, as he had been, in his opinion, occupying far too much space at Constabulary Headquarters. His own office had been too large and that he could not justify the cost. He indicated that he had not been prepared to buy or rent accommodation, but had asked the Constabulary's Estates team to look for alternative accommodation, with the proviso that any accommodation identified would not compromise operational policing. He explained that move would facilitate the joint Police and Fire Headquarters; a decision that had been taken before he had been elected as Commissioner. The Commissioner did indicate that he wished he had consulted with the Panel at an earlier stage over the office relocation. The Chairman thanked the commissioner for his comprehensive response.

Councillor David Thompson asked the Commissioner how he was holding Government to account and challenging Government; areas that were included within the Police and Crime Plan.

The Commissioner responded by saying that since 2010 the Constabulary's budget had been reduced by over £50m; by 2020 this would have increased to £60m. He outlined some consequences of these cuts on staff numbers; included firearms officers, which has reduced from 95 in 2010 to 48 in 2016. The Commissioner outlined the steps that he had taken to influence the Government, including work with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and a joint approach to Government by Commissioners from the North West, including the Rt Hon Andy Burnham, elected Mayor of Greater Manchester. He also outlined successful approaches for additional funding that had been made to the Home Office to enable the Constabulary to undertake work on cases of historic sexual abuse, including cases related to Crewe Alexandra Football Club. Further bids were being made through the Police Transformation Bids programme; including a bid for a multi agency funding to address stalking.

The Chairman commented on Police numbers and budgets, noting that the Panel (and before that the Police Authority) had always supported the Police precept. He also commented on the number of firearms officers, reflecting that the reduction of firearms officers over recent years had been a response to local circumstances; but noting that evens over recent months had in all likelihood changed what was needed across Cheshire. He asked the Commissioner if firearms crime and levels of overall crime had increased in Cheshire in the last two of three years. The Commissioner indicated that he would respond to the question on firearms crime in writing, but that overall crime rates had not decreased. The Commissioner was of the view that the only reason that firearm officer numbers had reduced were budgetary, the Chairman indicated that he recalled the former Chief Constable advising that fewer firearms officers were needed across the Constabulary.

Councillor Dawson asked the Commissioner how he scrutinised the Chief Constable over issues relating to data protection. The Commissioner responded by saying that the Chief Constable was responsible for data processed by the Constabulary and that the Deputy Chief Constable was the Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO). He also highlighted the role of the Information Commissioner. The Commissioner explained that he received regular updates on data protection across the Constabulary.

Councillor Dawson asked for confirmation that Cheshire Police had all the necessary Data Sharing agreements in place with partner organisations. The Commissioner agreed to check on the situation and report back in writing, suggesting that the issue may be one that could be discussed in depth at an informal meeting.

Mrs Sally Hardwick asked the Commissioner for an update on the work that was being undertaken to review the collection and presentation of statistics across the Police, noting recent criticism by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMRC). The Commissioner informed the Panel that he was holding a special scrutiny meeting on 3 July 2017 on this issue. Panel members were asked to indicate if they had any questions they would like the Commissioner to ask the Chief Constable. The Deputy Chairman noted that legal definitions existed in relation to crime.

The Deputy Chairman asked for clarification over sickness information available on the Constabulary website, noting that it was very difficult to identify trends. The Commissioner indicated that he had already asked the Constabulary to make more information available.

The Chairman asked the Commissioner to provide written responses to Panel members who had submitted questions in advance, but due to time constraints had been unable to have them answered.

Councillor Dawson suggested that the Panel may wish to consider setting a maximum time for the Commissioner to answer questions. The Chairman indicated that this would require a change to the Panel's Procedure Rules and asked Councillor Dawson to write to him on this issue, which could then be discussed at a future meeting.

77 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

78 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Sally Hardwick suggested that the Panel send it's thanks to Mr Mark Sellwood, former Chief Executive of both the Police Authority and the Commissioner's Office. The Panel supported this proposal and the Chairman agreed to draft a letter to send to Mr Sellwood.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman writes to Mr Mark Sellwood thanking him for his excellent work in supporting policing in Cheshire over many years.

Councillor Amanda King suggested that the Panel formally recognise the outstanding contribution of the emergency services following the recent terrorist outrage in Manchester, noting that a serving Cheshire Police Officer had lost her life and another victim had attended a Cheshire School. The Panel were supportive of this suggestion.

RESOLVED

That the Panel put on record its appreciation of the work of the Police, Fire and Rescue Services, Ambulance Service and Health professionals following the terrorist outrage in Manchester on 22 May 2017.

The meeting noted that a Confirmation Hearing for the position of Chief of Staff of the Commissioners office would be held on Wednesday 12 July, starting at 6.30pm at Wyvern House, Winsford.

79 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Panel would be on Friday 22 September 2017, starting at 10.00am

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.45 pm
Councillor H Murray (Chairman)