

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Police and Crime Panel**
held on Friday, 1st December, 2017 at Council Chamber, Municipal
Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Cheshire East Councillors H Murray (Chairman), S Edgar and P Findlow

Cheshire West & Chester Councillors R Bisset, A Dawson and M Delaney

Warrington Councillors B Maher and A King

Halton Councillors N Plumpton Walsh and D Thompson

Independent Co-optees: Mr R Fousert and Mr Evan Morris

Officers: Mr B Reed, Mr M Smith, Mrs J North

Apologies

Councillor D Thompson and Mrs S Hardwick

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

There were no declarations of interest.

97 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present, wishing to use the public speaking facility.

The Chairman reported that there had been two questions submitted by members of the public. It was not appropriate for the Panel to respond to one of the questions and the other related to the complaints process. The Chairman stated that he would take questions of clarification from Panel members in respect of this issue, but would not take questions regarding the details of the complaints.

Suzanne Antrobus, Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO) for Cheshire East Council, who was dealing with the complaints, was present at the meeting and provided an update in respect of the complaints received. There had been six in total and four of these covered broadly into the same matter. She had been liaising with an outside organisation, to see if the Panel could proceed with them and the position had now been reached where they could be progressed. The other two were at

the start of the process, the reason for this being that clarification was being sought from the complainant, to assist them and the Panel. Her role was to compare the complaint with the code of conduct and to get further information. With regard to the last complaint, she had been trying to bring together information for the Chairman, as it had a long history and she had needed to ascertain what was relevant. It would now be necessary to bring all the complaints together into a report for the Chairman, Monitoring Officer and Head of Governance and Democratic Services to consider and there was certain criteria to go through. She thanked Panel members for their patience. It was noted that the complaints could be considered by the Chairman or by a Sub-committee, however, there was not any guidance in the Panel's procedures as to where the complaints should be dealt with. She reported that she had been keeping the complainants as well informed as possible.

Following the update, the Chairman stated that he was happy to act as a filter for the complaints, along with the DMO and Head of Governance and Democratic Services, but for transparency he would like a Sub-committee to be formed to consider anything further than this.

The DMO reported that procedures stated that the Sub-committee should be made up of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and an independent co-opted person. The Chairman proposed that another member should also be included and it was agreed that this should be a Labour member, excluding Warrington Members.

RESOLVED

That a sub-committee be established to consider the submitted complaints, to comprise the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Panel and an independent co-opted member of the Panel, with representation from one of the Labour Members of the Panel, excluding Warrington Members, subject to availability.

98 FEEDBACK FROM THE SIXTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR POLICE AND CRIME PANELS

Mr Bob Fousert had attended the sixth national Conference for Police & Crime Panels on 6 November 2017, at the Warwick Conference Centre, on behalf of the Panel and provided an update to the Panel.

His initial observations had been that some panels had sent as many as eight delegates and, as such, were able to attend many of the workshops, when he had only been able to attend one of three.

From networking throughout the day, he had felt that it was clear that Cheshire PCP was well ahead of many other Panels in terms of the

use of webcasting, social media, number and types of meetings held and the recent move to rotating meeting locations around the county.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

99 LIMITING RESPONSE TIME TO QUESTIONS

At the meeting of the Panel held on 22 September, the Secretariat had been asked to look into the options for the way in which the Police and Crime Commissioner answered individual questions from Panel members.

A paper was submitted, which provided a summary of the research undertaken and provided the Panel with a number of options.

The Panel was recommended to consider whether it wished to amend its Procedure Rules to place limitations on the time taken by the Commissioner to answer questions from Panel members; or to otherwise change its Procedure Rules to give the Chairman the discretion to limit the time allocated to the Commissioner to answer individual questions.

In considering the options, the Panel did not consider it necessary to place limitations on the time taken by the Commissioner to answer questions, or to change its Procedure Rules, as the Chairman already had powers to use his discretion, and it was considered sensible to continue with the current approach of relying on the Chairman's discretion.

RESOLVED

That the report be received and no further action be taken.

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

The Commissioner was welcomed to the meeting.

1. Councillor Paul Findlow asked the Commissioner for an update on the most significant and material issues that had arisen since the last time the Commissioner had met with the Panel. He particularly requested an update on the suspension of the Chief Constable and the interim arrangements that had been put in place in response to the suspension. The Commissioner indicated that having received legal advice he was unable to comment in any way on the suspension of the Chief Constable. Following a discussion with the Chairman, the Commissioner agreed, that upon receipt of a request in writing, he would he

would seek further legal advice on this issue and respond to the Panel in writing.

2. Having received an assurance that the situation in relation to the Chief Constable would be clarified in writing, the Chairman asked the Commissioner to focus on the other key issues that had arisen over the previous few months. The Commissioner responded by indicating that much of his time had been taken with budgetary matters. He had been concerned that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget in November had made no reference to Policing. However, he did indicate that he had met with Nick Hurd MP, Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service and applauded the Minister for the consultation that he was undertaking with Police and Crime Commissioners. Information about the central Government funding available for 2018/19 was likely to be announced in the Autumn Statement, expected before Christmas.
3. The Vice Chairman asked the Commissioner if he thought his membership of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, at an annual cost of £23,700, provided good value for money. The Commissioner responded by saying that he thought it did, but offered to go into the issue in more detail at a future informal meeting with Panel members.
4. Returning to the subject of the key issues, the Commissioner had addressed over the preceding few months, Councillor Robert Bisset asked the Commissioner to briefly update the Panel. Noting that crime was on the increase, but that funding was reducing, the Commissioner particularly highlighted concerns over organised crime, modern slavery and cyber crime. He noted that some of his fellow Police and Crime Commissioners elsewhere in the country had indicated that they would cease to fund PCSOs, but that he was committed to what he saw as an important role continuing in Cheshire.
5. The Chairman followed up the issue of PCSOs by asking the Commissioner for the outcome of the comprehensive consultation exercise which had been ongoing for some time and sought clarity over the cost to partner organisations of funding PCSOs. The Commissioner responded by saying that the overall cost of funding a individual PCSO had not increased and that he was committed to equality of provision across Cheshire, with each community having a PCSO at no cost to a town or parish council. The Chairman sought clarity over how PCSOs would be deployed. The Commissioner confirmed that he would set the vision for how they should be used, but that the Constabulary would deploy them operationally.

6. Councillor Andrew Dawson sought clarity over the data that was published on the Commissioner's website and also on the date of the last Scrutiny Panel. He was concerned that no recent data appeared to have been published. The Commissioner indicated that the last public scrutiny meeting had been on 23 August and that the next meeting would be on 4 December. With reference to crime data he noted that this was only published when it had been subject to rigorous audit. Responding to the Chairman the Commissioner clarified his policy in relation to openness and transparency, noting that his approach was to publish significantly more information than was legally required.
7. Councillor Andrew Dawson, noting that the latest available figures appeared to show that there appeared to have been an increase in absent children, asked the Commissioner how he was responding to this. The Commissioner agreed that the figures had increased, noting that he had asked the Police to look into the issue. He had suggested to the Constabulary that there may be things to learn from applying the Herbert Protocol for missing persons to absent children.
8. Mr Evan Morris asked the Commissioner if he would give consideration to evaluating an "emergency first" model of providing services. Such a model would combine elements of a retained fire fighter and a PCSO. Similar, but not identical approaches had been developed elsewhere in the country. The Commissioner indicated that he was aware of the concept and would research the issue. The Chairman responded by saying that the Panel would revisit this issue at a future meeting.
9. The Vice Chairman asked the Commissioner, how after nineteen months in office, he would describe his relationship with the Panel. He also sought a degree of clarity over the Commissioner's approach to openness and transparency. The Commissioner responded by indicating that all of his formal decisions were published on his website; he encouraged the Panel to scrutinise him over these decisions. The Commissioner also offered to have a wider discussion at an informal meeting over ways of working.
10. Councillor Amanda King had submitted a question in advance of the meeting, in relation to the award of white ribbon status to the Commissioner's Office, Cheshire Constabulary and Cheshire Local Authorities. She also sought clarity over concerns that some women were being placed in custody for their own safety. The Commissioner noted that once accreditation had been achieved by Halton Council (who would be accredited very shortly and the delay had been purely administrative) all four local Councils in Cheshire would have been accredited, as were

his Office, the Constabulary and the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. He paid particular tribute to the Fire Authority's Chair and the Fire and Rescue Service's Chief Officer for the leadership that they had provided in this area. The Commissioner informed the Panel about a recent visit to Styal Prison, where he had met with a number of inmates, all of whom had been victims of domestic violence before committing an offence which had seen them imprisoned. Some of the women he had met had said that they felt safer in prison than they did living in the community, as there was no place of sanctuary in the community. As a consequence, they chose to be in prison. The Panel and the Commissioner agreed that there was still much work to do in this area which would be revisited by the Panel in the future.

11. Councillor Amanda King asked the Commissioner if Cheshire Constabulary had yet been financially recompensed for the support it had provided to Greater Manchester Police (GMP) in the day's after the Manchester Arena bombing in June. The Commissioner reassured the Panel that mutual aid arrangements had worked well, but that funding had not yet been forthcoming. He noted that GMP would require additional funding from central Government in order to meet the costs incurred by Cheshire Constabulary. However, he hoped that the issue would be satisfactorily resolved during the current financial year.
12. Councillor Stephen Edgar asked the Commissioner for clarification over the issuing of additional hand held IT equipment to Police Officers, seeking information on the rationale behind its use and also its the cost. The Commissioner agreed to respond in writing.
13. The Vice Chairman noted that it has been reported in the national press that many forces were turning off their speed cameras in a bid to save money. As Road Safety was high on the list of public concerns, he asked the Commissioner to tell the Panel how many road safety cameras there were in Cheshire and how many of these, if any, had been decommissioned in order to save money. The Commissioner outlined the various ways in which speeding was enforced across Cheshire; this included 37 fixed "yellow box" cameras, four mobile vans and hand held units used by Officers. He confirmed that he had been informed by the Constabulary that no cameras had been turned off to save money. He also outlined his plans to see all PCSOs trained in the use of hand held mobile units. Mr Evan Morris asked about the status of Community Speed Watch. The Commissioner confirmed that the scheme was well resourced and was working well and outlined the links between such schemes and the potential role of PCSOs. The limitations of

enforcing 20 mph speed limits around schools was noted by Panel members.

14. Councillor Dave Thompson, who was absent from the meeting due to illness, had submitted a question in advance relating to the extremely serious incident which had been reported of a PCSO being directed into a woodland into a situation that had become a knife attack involving a gang. He had asked the Commissioner, if in his role as a scrutineer of the Acting Chief Constable he was satisfied that there was every support available to help safeguard frontline officers and PCSOs when on duty. In particular was the force considering a widening of the use of CCTV bodycams which could be both a deterrent and essential in identifying offenders. The Commissioner responded by saying that he was satisfied that there were adequate safeguards in place to support front line officers. He noted that the PCSO who had been attached was now back at work and had thanked his colleagues for the support he had received. The Commissioner indicated that body worn cameras were going to be rolled out to all Police Officers and PCSOs in Cheshire during 2018.

Note - The following questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting, but due to time constraints were not asked at the meeting:-

Bob Fousert

1. What impact upon Cheshire forensic submissions and associated criminal investigations do the recent findings of inappropriate activity at Radox Testing Services (Manchester) have? What actions if any are being taken to mitigate any fall out from this recent disclosure?

Councillor Amanda King

The November Budget and what this means for policing?

2. It is clear that November reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services revealed that the Police budgets nationally are set to lose £700 million by 2020 – which is a huge loss considering crime is increasing, last year recorded crime was up 11%, for those crimes actually reported. This may mean slightly different challenges to policing by County however, how will the terrible lack of any additional support in this month budget effect Cheshire Policing? Police forces are having to make tough decisions effecting neighbourhood policing especially for the increasing crimes against vulnerable people and the ability to provide resources to support against the ever increasing

cybercrime. There seems to be a demanding increase in deed and yet a reduction in funding, surely there is a breaking point and Government has missed the warning signs! Does this mean the Cheshire Police will have to rely more and more on community programs and be propped up by charity or community funded initiatives, which include low paid staff or volunteers with no statutory authority to action against crimes.

101 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.

It had been agreed at the reconvened meeting of the Panel, which had taken place earlier in the morning, that an additional formal meeting of the Panel should take place on 10 January 2018, the date scheduled for the next informal meeting of the Panel

It was agreed that an item relating to crime data should be included for consideration at the 10 January meeting. It was suggested that the Acting Chief Constable should be invited to attend the meeting, or the following meeting, subject to her availability.

On the issue of data, it was noted that Cheshire Police had published the Community Safety Strategic Needs Assessment, which gave a total analysis of crime and priorities and how this was used to shape the Police Commissioner's delivery plan. It was suggested that this should be looked at more closely and it was agreed that it should form the basis of a report for consideration at the next meeting, to enable a comparison with the statistics in the Crime Plan and budget for 2018/19.

It was noted that a meeting of the Scrutiny Board had taken place in August. The minutes of the meeting would be included on the agenda for next formal meeting of the Panel on 10 January 2018.

RESOLVED

1. That the Community Safety Strategic Needs Assessment form the basis of a report for submission to the next meeting of the Panel, to enable a comparison with the statistics in the Crime Plan and budget for 2018/19.
2. That the Acting Chief Constable be invited to attend one of the next two formal meetings of the Panel, subject to her availability.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 10 January 2017, at 10am. (Note – Subsequently changed to 2pm).

The meeting commenced at 10.10 am and concluded at 12.35 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)