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Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Police and Crime Panel**
held on Friday, 3rd February, 2023 in the The Council Chamber, Wyvern
House, The Drummer, Winsford, CW7 1AH

PRESENT

Councillors:

Cheshire East: Councillors J Paul Findlow, Laura Jeuda and
Mick Warren

Cheshire West & Chester: Councillors Rob Bissett, Keith Millar and Lynn
Riley

Halton Councillors Martha Lloyd Jones and Norman
Plumpton Walsh

Warrington: Councillors Mo Hussain and Wendy Maisey
OBE

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

Officers: Mr Brian Reed, Cheshire East Council
Mr Martin Smith, Cheshire East Council

48 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Jane Whalen (Warrington) who was
represented by Cllr Mo Hussain.

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

No declarations of interest were made.

50 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public wished to speak at the meeting.

51 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd December 2022 be approved. Two small typographical errors were noted. These would be corrected in the published minutes.

52 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed Cllr Mo Hussain (Warrington Council) to the meeting.

The Chair thanked the Commissioner for hosting the finance briefing for Panel members held at Police HQ the previous week.

53 REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

The Panel noted that during 2022 two complaints about the Police and Crime Commissioner had been received. In line with the Panel's procedure, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Complaints Management Sub Committee reviewed each complaint, taking advice as appropriate. In each case they had determined that there was no legitimate complaint against the Commissioner and the complaints were therefore rejected. Relevant timescales were met in both cases.

54 PANEL'S WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that the March 2023 meeting of the Panel would receive a draft programme of meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal year for its consideration.

There was general agreement that to accommodate cost effective and efficient webcasting of meetings, the Panel would default to holding its meetings at Ellesmere Port Library; with other locations across the county being used as necessary. There was recognition that the Panel needed to be mindful of its carbon footprint when arranging meetings.

55 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Chair explained that three questions had been formally submitted to the Commissioner in advance of the meeting and that these had been included in the published papers.

56 WELCOME TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER/ INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSIONER

The Chair welcomed the Commissioner to the meeting.

The Commissioner outlined the progress that the Constabulary were making with the recruitment of new Police Officers, noting that a further intake was scheduled for March 2023. He outlined the success of his **Community Cashback Fund which used money seized** under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Each of Cheshire's nine Local Policing Units had been allocated £10,000 from the Fund.

The Commissioner briefed the Panel on the work that the Constabulary were undertaking with the Hollie Gazzard Trust, which was aimed at making Cheshire's streets even safer.

57 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSED PRECEPT FOR 2023/24

The Commissioner outlined his proposed Precept for 2023/24, taking questions from Panel members on the details of his proposals. There was a general recognition that an increase in Council Tax bills for the coming year would pose challenges for many families across the county.

Cllr Martha Lloyd Jones (seconded by Cllr Norman Plumpton Walsh) proposed that the Panel veto the Commissioner's proposal to increase the Policing element of the Council Tax by 6.37 per cent. When put to the vote, 6 Panel members supported the proposition, 5 were against and 2 members abstained. As a two thirds majority of all Panel members was necessary for such a proposition to be carried, the proposition was lost.

Further discussion took place on the details of the Commissioner's proposed Precept.

RESOLVED

That the proposed Precept be supported, with recommendations being made to the Commissioner.

The Chair's letter, detailing the Panel's recommendations to the Commissioner, is attached to these minutes. The Commissioner's response is also attached.

58 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Panel members asked the Commissioner a range of 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.

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Mr John Dwyer
By email

Cheshire Police and Crime Panel
c/o Cheshire East Council
Westfields
Middlewich Road
Sandbach
Cheshire
CW11 1HZ

Date: 3rd February 2023

evan.morris@CheshirePoliceAndCrimePanel.org.uk

Dear Commissioner,

POLICE PRECEPT 2023/24

Thank you for attending this morning's meeting of the Cheshire Police and Crime Panel and for presenting your proposed Precept. The Panel are also grateful for the presentations made last Friday, when members met informally with you, your Finance Officer, and senior Police colleagues.

As its Chair, I can formally confirm that at this morning's meeting the Panel voted to support your proposed Precept. All Panel members recognised that an increase in Council Tax bills for the coming year will pose challenges for many families across the county. As you will be aware, a majority of those Panel members who voted, supported a proposal to veto your Precept because it was seen to be too high. The necessary two thirds majority was not reached, and the veto therefore not triggered.

The Panel did agree to make a number of recommendations which it asks that you consider. In making these recommendations the Panel is mindful that it is important that the Cheshire Constabulary work as efficiently as possible to maximise the benefit of the budget made available to them. The Panel would specifically request:

- You ensure that the Police increase collaborative working with other agencies and that they look afresh at how they can adopt transformational working practices, so that the Cheshire public can be assured that every pound paid in Council Tax that goes to the Police is being spent wisely.
- You encourage the Police to adopt a collegiate approach to support the public during the current cost of living crisis, working with other agencies when appropriate.
- You ensure that the Police continue to adopt and develop a collaborative approach with partners to reduce violence against women and girls.

The Panel would also recommend that when consulting with the public over levels of the Police precept for 2024 /25, a wider range of options is offered, including ones below the level that would trigger a referendum.

Yours sincerely,

Evan Morris

Evan Morris MBE
Chair, Cheshire Police and Crime Panel



Mr Evan Morris,
Cheshire Police and Crime Panel,
C/O Cheshire East Council
Westfields
Middlewich Road
Sandbach, Cheshire
CW11 1HZ

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Cheshire Constabulary Headquarters
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Oakmere Road
Winsford
CW7 2UA

Date: 23rd February 2023

Sent via email:
evan.morris@CheshirePoliceAndCrimePanel.org.uk

Our Ref:
PCC/20220223

Your Ref:

Tel:
01606 364000

Email:
PCC@cheshire.police.uk

Dear Evan

Many thanks for your letter dated 3 February 2023 which you sent following the Panel's endorsement of my precept recommendation. May I take this opportunity to thank you and the Panel for your support which will help Cheshire Constabulary maintain its excellent performance and keep the people of Cheshire safe.

I acknowledge the Panel's concerns about the cost of living crisis and the impact that increases in council tax bills will have on many families across the county. As was explained at the meeting itself, I did not take this decision lightly, but I was able to report that over 70% of the public consulted on my proposals showed their support for an increase of at least £15 for a Band D property (equating to £1.25 extra per month). To put that in context, more than two thirds of the properties in Cheshire are in Bands A-C, meaning a majority of the local population will pay less than a £1.25 increase in the policing element of their council tax.

Cheshire Constabulary has always worked collaboratively with its partners across Cheshire to ensure that the money being spent is maximised as much as possible. Where opportunities arise for efficiencies or transformational working practices, I will work with the Chief Constable to identify ways in which we can work differently to benefit the people we serve. The Constabulary has a proud record of working with other blue light services to seek efficiencies and work more effectively and this will continue. This will also include working with wider parties across the County to provide more effective and better services for the public. We already work very closely with local authorities on initiatives funded through the monies secured by my commissioning team, most recently the Safer Streets initiative, and work closely with the third sector to provide additional support to the most vulnerable members of our communities. This ensures a greater focus on the needs of the victim and utilises the skills and knowledge that other organisations can bring to our work.

I am very aware of the need to adopt a collegiate approach to the cost of living crisis and am working with the Leading Cheshire and Warrington Leaders Group, as well as partners such as a local foodbank to ensure that we can support the most vulnerable in our communities whenever we can.

I have already mentioned the Safer Streets work which my office has secured funding for, which is an excellent example of the collaborative approach to responding to violence against women and girls. The new Strategic Policing Requirement has added 'violence against women and girls' as a new threat type and I will therefore be working closely with the Chief Constable, local authorities and others on how we can address this risk. Under the new Serious Violence Duty, my office is leading work with partners in the four local authorities to help identify the key issues locally and develop a strategy to tackle those issues with a collaborative approach. Violence against women and girls is likely to feature highly in that emerging strategy.

On your final point about when I next consult with the public on the precept for 2024/25, I can confirm that I will consult on options which fall below the referendum level, as I did this year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left and a short horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John Dwyer
Police & Crime Commissioner