



Cllr Bob Cernik
Northwich Town Council

Date: 15th April 2024

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

Dear Cllr Cernik,

CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for sparing the time to attend the Police and Crime Panel on 15th March. At the meeting you raised a number of issues and I promised to respond to you in writing, I apologise that it has taken me a little time to get back to you.

By way of introduction, it would be helpful if I outlined the formal responsibilities of the Panel, these are enshrined in statute and are outlined in the Panel's Procedure Rules, which include the Panel's Terms of Reference, these are attached to this letter.

In the context of the issues currently under discussion, the key paragraphs are (6), (7) and (8). As you will see these all relate to the work of the Commissioner, not the Chief Constable or Constabulary. That said, I do recognise that leadership on issues such as culture and behaviour comes from the top, and that the words and actions of the Commissioner are important in setting a tone for policing across Cheshire.

Over the last three years since the Commissioner's election, the Panel have had a number of conversations with him over the culture he wishes to see across the Constabulary. The Panel have also discussed the Constabulary's approach to vetting with both the Commissioner and senior Police Officers, these discussions have predominantly taken place at informal meetings, such meetings are held with the Commissioner three or four times a year. Whilst challenging questions have been asked, the Panel have been reassured by the outcome of these conversations.

Whilst the vetting of new recruits and the ongoing vetting of police officers may seem a relatively narrow issue, the Panel have taken the view that vetting plays a vital role in establishing and maintaining the culture of the Constabulary. As you may be

aware, the quality and frequency of the vetting of officers has featured as a key issue in the reviews that have been undertaken into the Metropolitan Police Service following a number of high profile cases, including the inquiry following the murder of Sarah Everard by serving Metropolitan Police Officer, Wayne Couzens.

You asked a number of specific questions about the nature, detail, take up and effectiveness of the equalities training undertaken by the Cheshire Constabulary. You also asked what training the Commissioner himself had undertaken. I have written to the Commissioner to ask these specific questions but have yet to receive a reply. I will ensure that you are provided with a copy of his reply when it is received.

You also ask what training Panel members have received. Equalities training was undertaken by the Panel a number of years ago, but I am conscious that following a period of relative stability, there has been significant turnover in Panel membership over recent months. However, it should be noted that ten of the Panel's thirteen members are elected Councillors. The training delivered across the four Cheshire Councils will vary, but I am confident that all Councillor members of the Police and Crime Panel will have undertaken some equalities training within their own Council since their election, such training is frequently mandatory.

A "new" Police and Crime Panel will be appointed for the 2024/25 civic year. At the present time I have no idea what the Panel's councillor membership will be following the annual meeting in June. However, irrespective of the detail of membership, I have asked that a training plan is developed, this plan will include the issue of equalities.

As you will be aware from your attendance at the last meeting, the Panel formally resolved to recommend that the newly elected Commissioner should include the 16 recommendations from the Angiolini Review in their new Police and Crime Plan and that progress should be monitored through the Commissioner's Scrutiny meetings with the Chief Constable. I will be writing to the newly elected Commissioner to draw this request to his attention. You may find it helpful to read the recommendations of this important Review, they can be seen at [Reports – The Angiolini Inquiry](#).

Thank you again for your attendance at, and contribution to, the last meeting of the Panel. I will be in contact with you again when I receive a response to my questions from the Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

Evan Morris

Evan Morris MBE
Chair, Cheshire Police and Crime Panel

(a) The Panel's Terms of Reference

- (1) To review and make a report or recommendation on the draft police and crime plan, or draft variation, given to the Panel by the Police and Crime Commissioner (the PCC).
- (2) To review the annual report of the PCC, and to put questions about the annual report to the PCC at a public meeting, and make a report or recommendation upon it.
- (3) To hold a confirmation hearing and review, make a report, and recommendation (as necessary) in respect of proposed senior appointments made by the PCC.
- (4) To review and make a report on the proposed appointment of the Chief Constable.
- (5) To review and make a report and recommendation (as necessary) on the proposed precept.
- (6) To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the PCC in connection with the discharge of the PCC's functions.
- (7) To make reports or recommendations to the PCC with respect to the discharge of the PCC's functions.
- (8) To support the effective exercise of the functions of the PCC.
- (9) To fulfil functions in relation to complaints about conduct matters, in accordance with the responsibilities accorded to the Panel by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.
- (10) To appoint an Acting PCC where this becomes necessary.
- (11) To suspend the PCC if it appears to the Panel that the PCC has been charged in the United Kingdom with an offence which carries a maximum term of imprisonment exceeding two years.