MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL** held at 10.30 am on 29 November 2013 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting.

Members:

Mrs Dorothy Ross-Tomlin (Chairman)
Mrs Pat Frost
Borough Councillor Terry Dicks (Vice-Chairman)
Borough Councillor John O'Reilly
Borough Councillor George Crawford QPM
District Councillor Margaret Cooksey
Borough Councillor Victor Broad
Borough Councillor Colin Davis
Borough Councillor Charlotte Morley
District Councillor Ken Harwood
Borough Councillor Bryan Cross
Independent Member Maria Gray
Independent Member Anne Hoblyn

Apologies:

Borough Councillor Richard Billington

50/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Richard Billington.

The Panel welcomed Colin Davis as the new representative from Spelthorne Borough Council, replacing Penny Forbes-Forsyth. The Panel thanked Penny Forbes-Forsyth for her contribution.

51/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

52/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

53/13 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4]

There were no public questions.

54/13 NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING REVIEW [Item 5]

The Chairman made a statement outlining the Panel's concerns regarding the Commissioner's recent announcement regarding a reduction in the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). It was highlighted that the Commissioner had made a commitment to inform the Panel of the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Policing Review before any decisions were made. The Panel expressed frustration that the recommendations of this review had been implemented without informing the Panel, and that the Commissioner had failed to act in the spirit of openness as set out in the protocol between the Commissioner's office and the Panel.

The Commissioner apologised that he had not shared the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Policing Review with the Panel. He commented that a reduction in the PCSOs was an operational matter and that it had been discussed at the bi-monthly management meeting with the Chief Constable. The item had been conducted under Part 2 as it related to staffing levels. The Panel highlighted that many of its members had only received formal notification upon receiving a letter from their local inspector. The Commissioner asked that the Panel note that the reduction outlined in the Review would allow an increase in PCs.

The Panel commented that they felt there was a lack of clarity about how the Commissioner distinguished a strategic matter from an operational one, particularly in relation to the joint enforcement policing model he was currently promoting. The Commissioner commented that he believed the enforcement approach to be a long-term strategic vision, and that no decision would be made in the immediate future. The Panel informed the Commissioner that they wished to be informed of all decisions that had a potential to overlap between the strategic and operational function of the police. The Commissioner commented that there were 39 reviews in the process of being conducted, and that he believed it was not always possible to consult. He highlighted that his role was connected to gauging public reaction to possible changes to the police, and that this was achieved in part through general public engagement. The Chairman stated that the Panel should be kept

informed of details of all reviews, and any key changes that would likely result.

Resolved:

- That, in the future, the Police & Crime Commissioner ensure that the Police & Crime Panel is briefed on any strategic changes to Surrey Police being proposed either by the Chief Constable or the Commissioner, and that Members are kept updated as to the progress of any reviews.

- That where there is any ambiguity as to whether a potential decision is strategic or operational in nature, the Police & Crime Commissioner ensure that the Police & Crime Panel is made aware of the matter before any decision is made.

- That the above be enshrined in the formal protocol between yourself and the Police and Crime Panel, to be agreed formally at the next meeting of the Panel.

55/13 POLICE AND CRIME PLAN QUARTERLY UPDATE [Item 6]

The Panel commended the Commissioner for the number of community visits he had conducted. A Member queried whether the decrease in detection rates represented a downward trend. The Commissioner clarified that multiple cautions were no longer recorded as detected, and that this change in recording processes had led to it appearing like there was a decrease. The Panel asked whether the Commissioner was confident that the reporting systems were giving an accurate reflection of the situation in Surrey. The Commissioner reassured the Panel that there had been a number of investigations into the reporting systems and he was confident that these systems were robust.

The Panel discussed what measures were in place to tackle cyber-crime in the County. The Commissioner commented that the Deputy Commissioner was developing work in this area. The view was expressed that cyber-crime was a growing national concern, and that the Commissioner would work with other Commissioners to identify how it could be addressed strategically.

The Commissioner informed the Panel that the research paper from Oxford Economics was now being shared with Surrey's MPs and other key stakeholders. The Panel challenged the Commissioner around his recent announcements indicating he was in favour of merging police forces, and asked whether he was accurately reflecting the wishes of Surrey residents. The Commissioner commented that he saw any potential merger as a long-term strategic goal, and an effective way of delivering better value for money. He reflected that it would be in the public interest to reduce costs. The Panel informed the Commissioner that the majority of its members were not in favour of the merger. However, the Chairman asked the Commissioner to note that the Panel did recognise and support the need for collaborative working.

The Commissioner updated the Committee regarding the sale of police stations. It was highlighted that the decision to delay the sale had made a saving due to the rising price of property, and that Surrey Police were now exploring options in relation to planning permissions.

The Panel asked how confident the Commissioner was that the zero tolerance agenda was being implemented and what measures were in place to track progress. The Commissioner commented that he would expect to see a reduction in crime as a key outcome of this approach. The Panel challenged him as to whether low-level offences were being picked up as part of this approach. The Commissioner agreed that further work needed to be done to consider how zero tolerance was implemented and recorded in relation to minor offences.

The Commissioner was asked by the Panel whether he had areas of particular concern. He highlighted tackling drugs in school and cross-border responses, but also stated his confidence in the measures already in place. One Member asked if there was potential for those at risk of rural crime to be equipped with radios; the Deputy Commissioner confirmed that this was a possible area for future exploration.

The Commissioner informed the Panel that the money reclaimed through the Proceeds of Crime Act was being used to increase visible street policing.

The Commissioner stated the view that the rise in serious sexual crimes was a result of people having an increased confidence in reporting these crimes.

Resolved:

- That the Panel note the report.

- That the Police & Crime Commissioner provide an update to the Police & Crime Panel on attempts to combat cyber-crime in Surrey.

56/13 BUDGET QUARTERLY UPDATE [Item 7]

The Commissioner commented that there was no area of major concern in relation to the financial position. However, the Panel was informed that the recent dismissal of the head of finance for Surrey Police had created some concerns around the lack of resilience in the current financial reporting arrangements. The Panel was informed that the head of finance for the PCC was currently also supporting Surrey Police, and that this, whilst legally sound, was not recommended by the Home Office. There was work being undertaken to redress this, and actions would be shared at the next Panel meeting.

Resolved:

- That the Panel note the report.

57/13 ALLOCATION OF PCC'S COMMUNITY SAFETY FUND [Item 8]

The Panel discussed the perception amongst some community groups that the application process was too complex and time-consuming. The Deputy Commissioner commented that efforts had been made to make the process as simple as possible, and that the application document was less than four pages. It was highlighted that 60 organisations had applied for funding from the Community Safety Fund so far.

The Panel asked why a number of awards had been granted to Surrey Police, it was clarified that these were done in partnership with other organisations and often applications were made on behalf of the lead partner.

The Panel asked whether there was a commitment to continue domestic abuse funding past 2015. The Commissioner informed the panel that Central Government was in the process of outsourcing victim services and Surrey Police would receive funding in relation to this.

The Panel queried what measures were in place to ensure duplication was avoided when awarding funding. The Deputy Commissioner commented that the Community Safety Fund panel regularly reviewed all applications to prevent duplication. It was highlighted that the increase in the membership of the panel ensured good oversight.

The Deputy Commissioner informed the Panel that any under-spend in relation to Community Safety Fund monies would be reclaimed by the Home Office at the end of the financial year. The Deputy Commissioner made it clear that the PCC's office was committed to ensuring all the funding was allocated before the end of the financial year.

Resolved:

- That the application form for the Community Safety Funding be provided to the panel.

58/13 LOCAL POLICING BOARDS AND CRIME SUMMITS [Item 9]

The Panel queried how information was fed back to the Commissioner following meetings of Local Policing Boards. The Commissioner commented this was currently done informally through local officers, but he was reviewing the process to ensure greater visibility and transparency.

The Panel asked what training was provided to officers to help them assist individuals with mental health problems. The Commissioner expressed the view that funding for this type of training was not sufficient nationally, but that Surrey Police were investigating what additional resources could be utilised to support additional training.

Resolved:

- That the Panel note the report.

59/13 FEEDBACK ON MONTHLY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE [Item 10]

The Panel queried whether there was a set of public minutes that recorded the decision to implement the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Policing Review, including the reduction in PCSO numbers. The Commissioner commented that, as the discussion had involved staffing matters, this decision had been taken in a private session and there was not a detailed record of the conversation available to the public.

Resolved:

- That the Panel note the report.

60/13 UPDATE ON POLICING ISSUES IN SURREY [Item 11]

The Chairman updated the Commissioner that the following issues had been identified by Panel members as being of concern to local residents:

- Police use of cautions vs. arrest and prosecution
- Amalgamation of Surrey and Sussex Police
- Computer crime & fraud in Surrey
- Zero-tolerance in relation to reported prevalence of outdoor sexual activity ("dogging") in Surrey.
- CID recruitment and training

The Commissioner made a commitment to provide detailed responses to the Panel following the meeting.

The Panel stressed the importance of consultation on strategic decisions being made by the Commissioner. It was highlighted that there were a number of concerns that the Commissioner was lobbying for a merge of police forces without having gathered views from Surrey residents or the Panel. The Commissioner commented that he was introducing the debate, and that any decision would be taken by the Home Secretary. It was also highlighted that any decision was unlikely to be made during the current Commissioner's term of office. The Panel urged the Commissioner to ensure that he undertook the widest possible public consultation on the matter.

61/13 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING [Item 12]

The Chairman informed the Panel that no complaints had been received since the previous public meeting. However, it was highlighted that a follow-up to a previous complaint had been received, and that this would be reviewed by the Police & Crime Panel Complaints Sub-Committee.

62/13 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 13]

The Panel reviewed their recommendations tracker and forward work programme. The Chair asked that the Panel note the Tackling Rural Crime in Surrey task group scoping document. The Panel was also informed that the Finance Sub-Group would be scrutinising the Commissioner's expenses at a future meeting.

Resolved:

- That the Tackling Rural Crime in Surrey task group is set up as outlined in the scoping document.

63/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 14]

It was noted that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel would be on 6 February 2014 at 10.30am.

Meeting ended at: 1.15 pm

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Chairman