

EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF 10 OCTOBER 2011 COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

Proposals for Police and Crime Commissioners

- 19.1 The Forum considered a joint report prepared by the Strategic Director of Communities and Commissioner of Police. The Paper sought to outline some of the implications arising from the election and appointment of Policing and Crime Commissioners (PCC's), which would follow assent of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. It was anticipated that these appointments would take place in November 2012. The Forum were asked to note and consider the information contained in the report and the likely implications arising therefrom.
- 19.2 The Forum noted that currently the Police Authority had 17 Members and was made up from elected Councillors and independent people, who scrutinised and set the strategic direction of Sussex Police. The Policing and Crime Commissioner would replace the current police authority membership/members in its entirety and would hold the Chief Constable to account. There would however, also be a Police and Crime Panel (PCP) who would in turn hold the Police and Crime Commissioner to account.
- 19.3 Chief Superintendent Bartlett explained that although arrangements had yet to be finalised there would be between seventeen and twenty people on the Police and Crime Panel made up from representatives from the district, borough, unitary and county councils in Sussex together with some independent member representation.
- 19.4 The Chair, Councillor Duncan stated that he was deeply concerned by some aspects of the proposed arrangements, not least lack of representation for/by the city. It seemed unlikely that the Commissioner would come from the city. Given its diversity, the city had its own series of specific challenges and it was hard to see how these would be properly represented by one person who had no knowledge or experience of the city and who was charged with responsibilities for such a large area. On a positive note, he was pleased that cross/agency arrangements were already in place between the various agencies in the city, the council's officers charged with community safety and health responsibilities and the Police and that regular meetings were taking place. He had attended such a meeting earlier that day.
- 19.5 Councillor Morgan concurred in that view stating that in view of the other challenges financial and other wise which Policing was facing the potential implications arising from these changes were great. There were concerns that the costs of setting up and running this model could be of the order of £25m (overall) at a time when the Police were seeking to deliver and maintain services under very challenging conditions. Lobbying had already taken place to invite revision of the current proposals and that had not borne any fruit to date. There was no option to go proceed and plan on the basis

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of the proposals as they stood. Suggestions made to the Policing Minister to seek to ensure that a local appointment was made had been rejected.

- 19.6 The Forum concurred with the views expressed and all expressed concern regarding the impact (not currently quantifiable) which might well arise.
- 19.7 The Chair, Councillor Duncan echoed concerns expressed in relation to potential costs, a figure of £4million had been mentioned in relation to Sussex alone and it was feared that figure could be higher. It was clear Royal Assent was going to happen and it was important that the council worked very closely with the Police to ensure that existing structures were embedded, this was in hand. Chief Superintendent Bartlett agreed confirming that rigorous arrangements were in place and that discussions were on-going.
- 19.8 Forum Members commented that it did not appear that the proposals had been welcomed anywhere, not least because they seemed rigid and provided little room for manoeuvre.
- 19.9 Councillor MacCafferty considered that it was important to engage with other countrywide organisations and to continue as appropriate and to lobby government to underline the special nature of the City.
- 19.10 The Commissioner for Community Safety stated that she would be attending a Local Government Association meeting in the near future with Sergeant Castleton and would put the Forum's views across there. A meeting was also scheduled with representatives from the Home Office and options including the possibility of making some special dispensations for the city could be discussed.
- 19.11 Councillor Randall, the Leader of the Council was present and concurred with all that had been said and Forum Members requested that he carry forward their views when this issue as discussed at Cabinet and elsewhere.
- 19.12 Chief Superintendent Bartlett stated that it was intended that the Police would continue to have the same visibility in the city and to work pro-actively with other agencies.
- 19.13 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Community Safety Forum notes that the Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to consider a report on the implications for governance and accountability of the introduction of a Police and Crime Commissioner, at its meeting scheduled to take place on 31 October. The Forum also notes that the matter will then be referred to Cabinet for a fuller discussion.
- (2) The Community Safety Forum also requests that the Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet consider and take notice of the views expressed by the Forum at their meeting today.