

Norfolk Police and Crime Panel



Date: **Wednesday 15th April 2015**

Time: **10.00am**

Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

4. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2015

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Norfolk Police and Crime Panel
Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting Held on Thursday 12th March 2015 at
10.00 a.m.
Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Main Panel Members Present:

Mr Fred Agnew	Norfolk County Council
Mr Alec Byrne (Chairman)	Norfolk County Council
Mr Keith Driver	Norwich City Council
Mr Ian Graham	Broadland District Council
Mr David Harrison	Norfolk County Council
Dr Christopher Kemp (Vice-Chairman)	South Norfolk Council
Mr William Richmond	Breckland Council
Mr Richard Shepherd	North Norfolk District Council
Mr Alexander Somerville	Co-opted Independent Member

Officers Present

Mr Chris Walton	Head of Democratic Services
Mrs Jo Martin	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Support Manager

Others Present

Mr Stephen Bett	Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk
Mr Martin Barsby	Head of Communications, OPCCN
Mr John Hummersone	Chief Finance Officer, OPCCN
Ms Sharon Lister	Performance and Compliance Officer, OPCCN
Mr Mark Stokes	Chief Executive, OPCCN
Mrs Lynn Yallop	PricewaterhouseCoopers

- 1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending**
 - 1.1 Apologies received from Mr B Long, Mr T Wainwright and Mrs S Brooks. No substitutions.
- 2. Members to Declare any Interests**

2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

3. To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

3.1 There were no items of urgent business.

4. Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's Travel and Subsistence Expenditure Scheme

4.1 The Panel was asked to consider the arrangements for reimbursing expenses incurred by the Commissioner in carrying out his duties.

4.2 The Chief Executive for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (OPCCN), Mr M Stokes, introduced his report. The Panel noted that:

- All information had been provided to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and that the IPCC had found that there was no evidence of a criminal offence having been committed by the Commissioner.
- He had commissioned an internal audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) of the Commissioner's expenses to establish the full facts following the media reports around the expenses claims in November 2013. The detail of this audit had not yet been published, but OPCCN intended to do so once the Panel had had the opportunity to review it.

5. Exclusion of the Public

5.1 The Panel was advised that they would need to consider whether to exclude the public for the consideration of certain aspects of OPCCN's report; namely the internal audit report by PwC.

5.2 The Democratic Services and Scrutiny Support Manager presented the public interest test, as required by the 2006 Access to Information Regulations for the consideration of the Panel as follows:

The Panel could consider the matter without the public being present as paragraphs 1 & 2 of Schedule 12A applied – the report disclosed information relating to an individual, and to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and the required public interest may be regarded as being met for the following reasons:

- In order to take the best and most informed decision that they could, Panel Members needed space to discuss and question the detailed information contained within the PwC reports without feeling constrained by the presence of the public and press.
- The information being treated as exempt would in due course be placed entirely in the public domain, together with the Panel's decision, and the reasons for it. The delay in doing so was not critical to the public interest.

- 5.3 The Panel members discussed the necessity for the report to be considered below the line. Mr Stokes was asked to clarify any implications that may exist for OPCCN should the Panel decide to discuss the report in public. Mr Stokes advised that OPCCN had issued a refusal notice under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as the PwC report was intended for future publication after it had been assessed by the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel.
- 5.4 Mr I Graham proposed, seconded by Dr C Kemp, that in the interest of openness and transparency the whole report from the PwC should be discussed and scrutinised in public by the Panel.
- 5.6 The Panel **RESOLVED** unanimously that the public should not be excluded whilst the PwC report was considered, that a copy should be provided to those members of the press and public who were present and should be published as soon as possible following the meeting.
- 6. Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's Travel and Subsistence Expenditure Scheme**
- 6.1 The Panel members voiced their concerns and disappointment that the IPCC had taken so long to conclude the managed investigation and stated that it was unacceptable for the people of Norfolk and the Commissioner and his staff to have been held in limbo for so long.
- 6.2 The Panel queried whether the management responses to the 4 key findings by PwC would be enough to minimise the likelihood of the problems occurring again, and noted the following responses:
- 6.3
- The Chief Executive for the OPCC stated that it had been clear that robust procedures were needed and that this was why the review had taken place and the 4 recommendations had been followed through.
 - The Chief Executive stated that the process would need to be regularly scrutinised to ensure it remained effective.
 - Mrs L Yallop from PwC, who had carried out the internal audit for the OPCCN, agreed that the recommendations were working effectively.
 - The Panel requested of OPCCN, and it was **AGREED**, that should any further issues relating to this scheme arise, that these should be brought back to the Panel for further scrutiny. OPCCN also **AGREED** to a suggestion that the Deputy Commissioner's expenses claims should be authorised by the Chief Executive following a review by the Chief Finance Officer, which would mirror the arrangements for the Commissioner.
- 6.4 The Panel asked for clarification about the Commissioner's tax status.
- The Chief Finance Officer for the OPCCN explained how the Commissioner's expenses are calculated, and advised that HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) had confirmed that the Police HQ at Wymondham is the PCC's permanent workplace.

- The OPCCN was in dialog with the HMRC regarding the travel expenses and HMRC had confirmed that the Commissioner was being taxed appropriately.
- The new travel and expenses scheme had been in place since January 2014 and was publicly available and open to scrutiny. So far no questions had been raised.

- 6.5 The Panel queried where the rules that governed the expenses for travel came from and were informed that it was down to the Chief Executive for each individual Commissioner's Office to decide what was acceptable in line with Home Office determination. However, the way that the Commissioner's expenses were handled in Norfolk was very similar to other areas and had been checked by the internal auditors.
- 6.6 The Panel **RESOLVED** that an appropriate scheme was now in place to manage the Commissioners expenses.
- 6.7 The Commissioner voiced his anger and frustration over the situation and the length of time the investigation had taken. He spoke passionately about the negative impact that this had had not only on himself (both personally and professionally), but also on his family and his staff.
- 6.8 The Panel members reiterated their concerns from earlier in the meeting regarding the length of time taken for the IPCC's managed investigation report to be published. They also reflected that it was unacceptable that the legislation should allow an individual to make an allegation of this nature without any evidence, and so require a referral to the IPCC. It would be more effective for Panels to locally investigate complaints of this nature. The Panel **RESOLVED** that the Chairman of the Panel should, in consultation with the Vice-Chairman, write to the Home Office to highlight these concerns.

The meeting closed 11.00am.

CHAIRMAN



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