

**JOINT MEETING OF BRAINTREE AND UTTLESFORD POLICE AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE GROUPS held at 7.30 pm on 30 SEPTEMBER 1997 at BRAINTREE POLICE STATION**

Present:- Councillor D Rice (Chairman of Braintree PCCG) and Councillor Mrs M Fisher (Chairman of Uttlesford PCCG).  
Councillor R C Wallace (Essex County Council); Councillor Mrs B Buchan (Braintree District Council); Councillor R Stone (Uttlesford District Council); Rev. C Bishop (Uttlesford Council for Voluntary Service); J B Buckley-Saxon (Castle Hedingham Parish Council); Mr T Meadows (Braintree Association of Local Councils) and Mr M Perry (Dunmow Chamber of Trade and Commerce).

In attendance:- Mick Purkiss - Secretary to the Group (Uttlesford District Council); Rob Atkins (Braintree District Council); Superintendent Ian Brown and Christine Bowden (Essex Police).

I. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Mr K Ivory and Councillor R C Smith, (Uttlesford District Council), Mr J Moxom (Parish Council representative), Ms Evans (President - Students' Union) and Mr J Bizley (USS).

I. **INTRODUCTION**

Councillor Rice explained that the meeting had been called to consider a merger of the two Groups and a new structure of meetings. This would involve some purely public meetings and some meetings of just the PCCG Members and it was hoped that this would enable the Groups to fulfil their aims and objectives more fruitfully and efficiently.

Superintendent Brown explained that under the current situation he was charged with consulting with members of the public and was also held accountable for performance against Policy Plans. He considered that these objectives were not being achieved as satisfactorily as they could be because of the dilemma of having to deal with the official business and making the meetings meaningful for the public. Often, the official business had to be rushed through in order to get to the public section as soon as possible. He considered that much more would be gained by arranging separate meetings with the public to enable them to participate and be more usefully involved. The official business of assessing progress against Policy Plans would be better dealt with by arranging joint meetings of the core members of the two Groups within the Police Division.

Councillor D Rice also considered that these types of meetings would ensure that there would be more meaningful discussions from the Group meetings which could be fed through to the Police Authority. He felt that it was more difficult for Members to be totally frank when the public were present. Mr Meadows also referred to the time constraints at meetings when the Group had to consider the official business and deal with the public session.

I. **FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor Mrs Fisher stated that during the HM Inspection attention had been drawn to the fact that there was a need to attract more members of the public to meetings of the PCCGs.

Councillor Mrs Fisher reported that the Police Authority:-

- \* envisaged that Consultative Group meetings would be held not less than twice a year
- \* commended the practice of inviting local organisations to host meetings
- \* commended the practice of holding two types of PCCG meetings ie. "open" meetings when specific invitations to attend were sent to a range of representative organisations in the area and "planning" meetings restricted to members of the PCCG when feedback from open meetings would be discussed, as well as the content of future meetings, planning issues etc.
- \* required that Minutes of the PCCG be submitted to the quarterly meetings of the Police Authority

- \* encouraged the Groups to ensure that the agenda reflected local issues and concerns

It was agreed that there was a need to encourage more members of the public to attend meetings and the following initiatives were supported:-

- \* utilise host organisations
- \* invite organisations and individuals close to the venue
- \* produce eye catching posters
- \* arrange meetings purely for the public
- \* involve the public all the way at meetings
- \* provide refreshments at the end of meetings to facilitate informal discussions
- \* involve local Members of the PCCG in the public meeting

## I. **MEMBERSHIP AND SECRETARIAL SERVICES**

Councillor Mrs Fisher reported that the current constitution of the PCCGs was as follows:-

- \* two members of the Police Authority (to serve as Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively)
- \* one representative of each district council within the Police Division or Sub-Division, as appropriate, with substitutes being permitted
- \* up to 15 representatives of local interests to be appointed by the above members for a period of two years
- \* the Local Police Commander, or a nominee, attending as necessary to assist the Group

It was explained that there was some flexibility within these arrangements. Both Districts within the Division covered a large area involving many Parish Councils. Mick Purkiss explained that in Uttlesford he had contacted the Uttlesford Association of Local Councils to discuss the names of Parish Council representatives who were likely to take an active part in the work of the Group.

It was AGREED that:-

- 1 the core membership of the PCCGs for planning meetings be set at 10 for each Group,
- 2 provision be made to invite other representatives to attend on specific issues should the need arise and
- 3 the Chairman and Secretary of each Group to agree the names of 10 appropriate members.
- 4 Superintendent Brown to deal with the structure and database for public meetings.

The Police Authority had previously agreed that secretarial services would normally be provided by civilian staff based at Divisional HQ unless other satisfactory arrangements were agreed locally. It was understood that the Police Authority were pursuing this matter but little progress had been made. Attention was drawn to the new Crime and Disorder Bill which placed a responsibility on local authorities to assist in community safety through the appointment of a Leadership Group and this might have implications for how the PCCGs were organised.

Councillor Wallace felt that the Secretariat should be independent of the Police Authority. However, it was generally considered that there should be a central secretariat for all the PCCGs to ensure continuity and consistency.

It was AGREED that

a letter be sent to the Police Authority expressing support for the provision of central secretarial support to all the PCCGs and urging that progress be made as quickly as possible.

I. **DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Group noted the following proposed dates for future meetings:-

<b>PLANNING</b>	<b>PUBLIC</b>	
	25 November 1997	Saffron Walden
13 January 1998	10 February 1998	Braintree
31 March 1998	21 April 1998	Halstead
14 July 1998	30 June 1998	Dunmow
13 October 1998	15 September 1998	Witham
	24 November 1998	Saffron Walden

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.

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