



PRESS INFORMATION

Date: 21st May 2010
Ref: election of Chair

Bedfordshire Police Authority Re-elects Peter Conniff

Members of Bedfordshire Police Authority unanimously agreed to elect Peter Conniff as Chair of the Police Authority for a sixth term of office at the Authority's Annual General Meeting, held today (May 21st, 2010).

An Independent Member of the Authority, Mr Conniff thanked members for their support and said that it was an honour to lead the Authority.

"I'm under no illusions that the coming year will be anything but highly challenging," he added. "Funding is set to become increasingly tighter, and we must prepare now to meet future financial shortfalls. Collaboration activities with Thames Valley and Hertfordshire have enabled Bedfordshire to at least sustain and, more often, improve performance by smarter use of the funds available to us. We will need to focus on value for money initiatives and accept that there are some risks to go with this.

"We will also be appointing the next Chief Constable and overseeing the establishment of a new senior team as her deputy will also be retiring later this year. We need to appoint people with the ability to meet the performance targets we have set, who have exceptional leadership qualities and who will have public facing profiles to increase confidence in the police service within all the communities of Bedfordshire.

"We will continue our collaboration work which has delivered both fiscal and performance efficiencies, but in July an 'Options for Change' plan will be presented to the Police Authority, with a number of different opportunities up for consideration. One of these options will be a business case for merger between Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, at which point both Police Authorities will individually consider whether to enter into a period of consultation.

"I feel that both the Authority and Force have improved significantly, most notably over the last three years and we have made a great deal of progress. However, I believe that we, alongside our colleagues across the country, are now facing the most challenging year since Police Authorities were set up in 1995.

"The Police Authority's own performance, and most particularly its resilience, are important at this time. It is my intention, in this my last year as a member, to support the Police Authority to enable it to go from strength to strength.

"Finally, I would like to thank Penny Fletcher for her outstanding support as Vice-Chair over the last five years. She has made a significant contribution to partnership working within the County as well as raising standards in custody through the Independent Custody Visitors Scheme.

"Following Penny's decision to stand down as Vice Chair I'm pleased to welcome Linda Hockey who is now taking over the role. Linda Hockey has been a member of the Authority for the past three years. The strategic planning work that she has been involved in during this time will enable her to be immediately effective in her new role and I have no doubt that she will extend the partnership work she has always undertaken."

Other key appointments were:

Vice-Chair - Linda Hockey (Independent Member)
Chair Performance Committee - Martin Pantling (Cllr Member)
Chair Finance Committee - Tony Brown (Independent Member)
Chair Human Resources Committee - Linda Hockey (Independent Member)
Chair Community Engagement Committee - Lloyd Denny (Independent Member)
Chair Complaints & Professional Standards Committee - Penny Fletcher (Independent Member)
Chair Audit & Business Assurance Committee - Kathy Johnson (Independent Member)

ends

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