

WARWICKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL Annual Report 2014-15



North Warwickshire
Borough Council



Contents

1. Foreword	3
2. The Role of the Police and Crime Panel.....	5
3. Key Activity and Achievements.....	6
4. Looking forward	12
5. Membership 2014/15	13
6. Getting Involved	14

1 Foreword



Councillor Dennis Harvey

*Chair of the Warwickshire Police and
Crime Panel 2014/15*

I'm pleased to present the second Annual Report of Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel. Since 2013/14, the Panel has overcome the initial challenge of being a new body in a new world, and has become increasingly confident in its role. The Panel has pro-actively identified where it can add value to policing strategy and priorities in Warwickshire, in addition to fulfilling its statutory obligation to hold the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner – Mr Ron Ball – to account. This progression was primarily driven by the positive work undertaken by the Panel's Task and Finish Group which was appointed to evaluate how existing victim support services were meeting the specific needs of victims of crime in Warwickshire. I believe that the review has positively contributed to the Commissioner's policy direction for future provision in the county. I'd also like to highlight a number of other achievements of the Panel during the year:

- Our two specialist Working Groups have gone from strength to strength and are now a critical feature of the Panel and it's activity – further details can be found on page 10 and 11.
- The relationship with the Commissioner and his office has continued to develop and we acknowledge the efforts Mr Ball has made in keeping us abreast of policy developments and decisions that impact local policing. I believe that the foundation of any professional relationship is based on a mutual understanding and respect of each other's roles and responsibilities and I hope that this will continue throughout the Commissioner's remaining term.
- Our participation in the police accountability inquiry, which was undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. As the inquiry will help to shape the policy direction for policing accountability after the General Election, I was pleased that we submitted a comprehensive view and evidence to the inquiry. I also met with Committee representatives to talk about how the Panel works in Warwickshire and the relationship that we have with the Commissioner. I look forward to reading the outcome of the inquiry when it is published in June 2015.

The Strategic Alliance between Warwickshire and West Mercia Police is welcomed; however, the Panel want to remain assured that this arrangement will deliver the best outcomes for Warwickshire, hence our decision to closely monitor its development throughout the year. It is widely accepted that Warwickshire Police is in a stronger position with the Alliance than it would have been on its own, given the significant reductions in policing budgets in recent years. However, it is critical that Warwickshire retains its independence and

identity within this collaboration and, with this in mind, the Panel welcomed the Commissioner's decision in October to retain the position of Chief Constable of Warwickshire Police and the Panel played an active part in the recruitment process through the confirmation hearing which was held in December.

Just as we have become accustomed to and confident in our new role, we face uncertainty around the future direction of policing accountability and what that might look like following the General Election. Despite the uncertainty, the people of Warwickshire can be reassured that, acting on their behalf, the Panel is committed to exercising its statutory duties of holding the Commissioner to account for the delivery of his Police and Crime Plan and supporting him by adding value to his work wherever possible.

Finally, I express my thanks for the support and dedication of my colleagues on the Panel and our support officers from Warwickshire County Council.

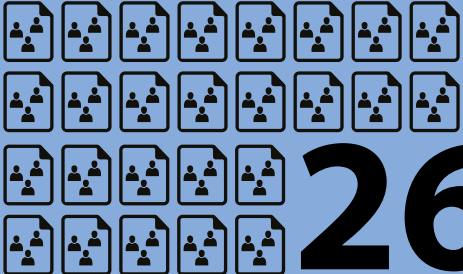
Key Statistics 2014/15:

The Panel has met formally

7 times 

at 4 different venues across the county

Key Statistics 2014/15:

 **26**

recommendations put to the Commissioner

2 Role of the Police and Crime Panel

The key role of the Panel is to hold the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner to account by acting as a 'critical friend'. Its role is to scrutinise, challenge and support the Commissioner, maintaining a 'check and balance' on his strategic actions and decisions.

The Panel is not responsible for holding the Chief Constable or the Constabulary to account and is not a replacement for the Police Authority. The Panel scrutinises the actions and decisions of the Commissioner, not the performance of the police force. For example, if the Panel identified an issue with violent crime, it would scrutinise what action the Commissioner was taking to address the issue at a strategic level, rather than ask police officers what action they were taking at an operational level.

Further details regarding the statutory powers and responsibilities of the Panel can be accessed at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/policeandcrimepanel

More information about the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner can be found through his website at www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk

In November 2012, Warwickshire County Council was designated as the host authority for the Panel. This means that the County Council is responsible for training and supporting the Panel and its meetings, as well as providing legal, financial and constitutional advice. In 2014/15, all host authorities received a Home Office grant for the provision of this support of £53,000.



3 Key Activity and Achievements

In line with the commitment made in its last Annual Report, the Panel this year has broadened its focus and explored wider, strategic issues to support the Commissioner in developing policy. The primary focus for the year was one of the Commissioner’s key themes: ‘Protecting Vulnerable People’.

The areas outlined in the following section are not exhaustive and are intended to provide a snapshot of the Panel’s key achievements. The full list of scrutiny areas considered by the Panel during the year can be found [here](#).

Victims’ Services Task and Finish Group



Left to right: Bob Malloy, Cllr Peter Morson and Cllr Nicola Davies

By 1st April 2015, the Commissioner was required to state his commissioning intentions with regard to the future provision of support services to victims of crime, acknowledging the existing services currently delivered by Victim Support and other specialist providers. In its capacity as a ‘critical friend’, the Panel offered a valuable role in assisting the Commissioner to develop his proposals by using its key links and contacts to third sector and community organisations. In June, the Panel appointed Councillor Nicola Davies, Councillor Peter Morson and Bob Malloy as the members of the Task and Finish Group to undertake the review.

During a three month period, the Group gathered and received evidence from a wide range of sources, including local representatives of support services and victims of crime, to evaluate the needs and expectations of victims against existing provision in Warwickshire, identify key challenges and ascertain areas for improvement. Underpinning this, the Panel identified the need for strategic vision and leadership from the Commissioner about the role of both statutory and voluntary bodies in supporting victims of crime and ensuring that there is a consistent, victim-centric service delivered across both sectors.

Key Statistics 2014/15:



20

reports received from the Commissioner

“I would like to pay tribute to the commitment of Warwickshire’s existing victims’ support services, volunteers and support staff and express our gratitude to those representatives and victims of crime who gave up their time to contribute to this review.”

Councillor Peter Morson, Chair of the Task and Finish Group

Evidence was gathered from a wide range of sources regarding victims' needs, including existing literature and discussions with local representatives of support services, which included Victim Support, Stonham, Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership, Warwickshire Youth Justice, Independent Domestic Abuse Advisers, ASSIST Trauma Care and Safeline. The views and experiences of victims were also captured through face-to-face discussions and questionnaires.

Key issues identified by the Task and Finish Group:

- The Level of under-reporting in all areas of crime, particularly domestic abuse, sexual violence and hate crime.
- The existing victim support network currently lacks cohesion and consensus about minimum standards of service and referral protocols.
- Funding to the voluntary sector is primarily short-term and uncertain, which hinders strategic thinking, forward planning and partnership working.
- Victims are not being consistently informed about their rights, in particular the value of a Victim Personal Statement.

1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014:

28,500 victims of recorded crime in Warwickshire.



Violent crime was the most prominent **(19%)**



followed by vehicle crime **(14%)**



and alcohol or drug-related offences **(10%)**

“Ensuring that victims of crime in Warwickshire are kept at the very heart of the criminal justice system and have the support they need is of paramount importance to me. Achieving better services for the public is a vital part of my role, and this report by the Police and Crime Panel’s Task and Finish Group will play an important part in my strategy going forward. I thank everyone involved in the Group for undertaking such a comprehensive piece of work.”

Ron Ball, Police & Crime Commissioner

Key outcomes:



- A full analysis of existing victim support provision in Warwickshire measured against the needs and expectations of victims of crime provided to the Commissioner to inform his proposals in this area. The evidence and findings of the Task and Finish Group can be accessed in its **final report**.
- 19 evidence-based recommendations to the Commissioner, which aim to place victims at the heart of the voluntary and criminal justice sectors and bring greater sustainability to the array of voluntary organisations, who contribute significantly to the recovery of victims of crime in Warwickshire.
- Request that the Commissioner make support for victims of domestic and sexual violence the highest priority area for his commissioning activity, and to consider the appointment of a Victim’s Champion for Warwickshire.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where 'something' is received (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) in exchange for the performance of sexual activities.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) became headline news in September 2014 following the publication of the Professor Alexis Jay report into CSE in Rotherham. Since then, further reports regarding CSE have been published and reports across the country have increased. This is one issue that Warwickshire cannot be complacent about. The Panel is mindful of the necessity of effective multi-agency working and information sharing in order to prevent, identify and tackle CSE and support victims, and has asked the Commissioner to provide regular updates on what action is being taken in Warwickshire.

Key outcomes:

- Key challenge on the importance of appropriate support to victims at the first point of contact with the police. The Panel was assured that Specially Trained Officers now work directly with the victim as part of the investigation.
- Confirmation that the conversion rates had increased to 21.6% (April to October 2014) for rape and 31.5% for domestic abuse.
- An agreement that the Panel will closely monitor this performance area in 2015/16.

Key outcomes:

- Constructive challenge to the Commissioner in terms of what action he has taken at a strategic level to address CSE and how this will be delivered on the ground by Warwickshire Police. The Commissioner advised that the Protecting Vulnerable People unit of the Strategic Alliance has been strengthened with three teams of six specialist policing staff designated to CSE.
- The Commissioner has assured the Panel that effectively preventing and investigating CSE is one of his priorities and that he is committed to the working with Warwickshire County Council to develop a multi-agency approach to safeguarding both vulnerable children and adults.

Key Statistics 2014/15:

The Task & Finish Group met

6 times 

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Members who participated in the review of victims' services were mindful that the personal approach and response of police officers can be pivotal in the victim's eventual decision to seek prosecution. They were therefore concerned that the reported 2012/13 'conversion rates' (i.e. the number of recorded crimes that are referred to the Crown Prosecution Service) for both domestic abuse and sexual violence were significantly lower than the national average.

The Panel wanted assurance that, given the complexities of these types of crime, victims were being provided with specialist support at the first point of contact with the police. As well as receiving evidence from the Commissioner, the Panel invited Detective Superintendent Cullen to attend the November meeting to outline the key challenges in investigating these types of crime and what attempts had been made to increase the number of prosecutions.

Scrutiny of the Local Policing Precept 2015/16

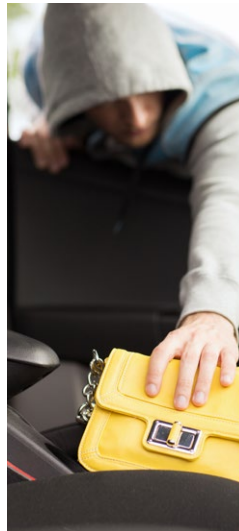
One of the key roles of the Panel is to consider the Commissioner's proposed policing budget and precept. The Panel held a meeting in February to consider the Commissioner's proposed increase of 1.99%. The Commissioner expressed his view that not increasing the precept would leave a shortfall in the Base Budget of approximately £3 million. This would ultimately have a significant impact on service delivery.

Members acknowledged the Commissioner's commitment to securing a sound budget position at the end of his term. They commented on the proposed precept increase in the context of the level of underspends and the balance of reserves, which had increased during 2014/15; however, the Panel accepted that the underspend position had been as a result of slower than anticipated recruitment of police staff and have been assured that this would be resolved throughout 2015/16.

Key outcomes:



- Following a thorough review of the Commissioner's proposals, the Panel agreed to note the proposed 1.99% increase in the precept and submitted a **detailed response to the precept**, which included three recommendations focusing on improved public consultation and improved financial monitoring.
- The Panel received assurances that the formation of the Alliance had provided many cost-saving opportunities without a detrimental impact on performance and service delivery.
- The Panel welcomed the Commissioner's commitment to retaining a Chief Constable for Warwickshire and to maintaining a minimum level of Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers.



Working Groups

During 2013/14, it became clear that the Police and Crime Panel wished to undertake proactive scrutiny work above and beyond its statutory obligations, in order to provide constructive challenge and support to the Commissioner in the delivery of his Police and Crime Plan. To assist with the additional work required, the Panel agreed to appoint two Sub-Panels (known as Working Groups) to drive forward this additional work.

Planning and Performance Working Group

Role:

- Monitors and tracks the delivery of the Commissioner's five priorities in his Police and Crime Plan 2013-17.
- Analyses the latest performance reports from Warwickshire Police in order to identify any key issues to raise with the Commissioner at future Panel meetings.
- Reviews the Work Programme of the Police and Crime Panel and makes recommendations to the Panel regarding areas of business for future meetings and Task and Finish Group reviews.
- Ensures that the activities of the Police and Crime Panel are aligned to the statutory functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17.

Membership: Councillor Dennis Harvey, Councillor June Tandy (Chair), Councillor Peter Fowler, Bob Malloy and Robin Verso.

"The Working Group has an important role in shaping the Panel's Work Programme, to ensure that timely issues are being considered at each meeting of the Panel. During 2014/15 we had an in-depth look at the Commissioner's Delivery Plan to monitor progress against the Commissioner's priorities."

Councillor June Tandy, Chair of the Working Group

Key Outcomes:



- Key contribution to the structure and content of the Commissioner's Delivery Plan, which outlines how each of the seven priorities will be delivered.
- Performance data and evidence has been used to identify and refer a number of key priority issues to the Panel for formal scrutiny. This has included the increase in violent crime in the north of the county and performance issues in respect of drug and alcohol support services. On both occasions, the Commissioner has been held to account for recent and planned action taken to address the issues.

Key Statistics 2014/15:

The Planning & Performance Working Group met

4 times 

Budget Working Group

Membership: Councillor Peter Fowler, Councillor Peter Morson, Councillor Gillian Roche, Robin Verso (Chair).

Role:

- Undertakes quarterly monitoring of the Commissioner's budget including the medium term financial plan, reserves and capital programme.
- Evaluates the Commissioner's proposed precept increase and makes recommendations, if considered appropriate, to the Panel at the annual precept meeting.

Key Statistics 2014/15:

The Budget Working Group met

3 times 

"The Working Group enables the Panel to identify key financial issues through in-depth analysis of the Commissioner's spending and questioning the Commissioner and his finance officers. In 2014/15, we focused on significant underspending against the Commissioner's revenue budget resulting in increasing reserves, and poor performance in planning and implementing capital projects."

Robin Verso, Chair of the Working Group

Key Outcomes:



- Timely scrutiny of quarterly budget reports and medium term financial plan.
- A focus on the Commissioner's use of reserves and Alliance Savings Plans.
- In February, the Working Group advised the Panel to consider very carefully whether the Commissioner was justified in increasing the precept by 1.99%. It was clear that the extra revenue to be raised was not needed in 2015-16 but the Panel decided not to veto the Commissioner's proposal because of the way Government controls work. If the Commissioner were to freeze the precept, he would be unable to recover this revenue in future years when it is needed.
- A focus on the management and monitoring procedures for the Capital Programme.
- Close working with the Commissioner's staff to develop an effective planning procedure that enables the Panel to undertake meaningful scrutiny and contribute to the Commissioner's priorities.

4 Looking forward

One key issue pertinent to all Police and Crime Panels, and Commissioners, at this point in time is the future direction of policing accountability following the General Election. At the time of writing this report, the policy direction remains unclear. In light of this, the Panel will take a 'business as usual' approach in fulfilling its statutory obligations and will continue to support the Commissioner in the effective exercise of his functions.

Whilst the Panel has a responsibility to be challenging, it will also be constructive in identifying areas where it can add value. One area the Panel will investigate is the relationship that the Commissioner has with relevant criminal justice and statutory bodies (i.e. Community Safety Partnerships, Police, the voluntary sector) and how he has both engaged and, where appropriate, supported them since his appointment in November 2012. This may include:

- Whether there is a clear understanding about what contributions those bodies can make in the delivery of the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.
- What has been the impact of the Commissioner's actions / decisions in this area.
- How far they feel able to positively influence and contribute to the work of the Commissioner and his decisions.

The Panel has agreed that a Task and Finish Group will be appointed in May 2015 to undertake this assessment, gather evidence and present its findings in a formal report, with appropriate recommendations to the Commissioner.

The Strategic Alliance between Warwickshire and West Mercia Police will continue to be monitored going forward. The Chairs of the Warwickshire and

West Mercia Panels have agreed to meet informally with the Police and Crime Commissioners to discuss the development of the Alliance, as well as share work programmes to identify areas of mutual interest that would benefit from cross-Panel working.

In addition, throughout 2015/16 the Panel will maintain a focus on the protection of Warwickshire residents and vulnerable people from harm, through monitoring the Commissioner's activity both independently and in partnership with other bodies. The Panel will monitor the implementation of the recommendations which it submitted to the Commissioner in respect of improving victim support provision and ensuring that specialist support for victims of sexual and domestic violence remains a key priority. The Panel will also continue to monitor the Commissioner's activity to prevent and tackle Child Sexual Exploitation.

The Panel acknowledges that a further £33 million savings are to be achieved across the Alliance by 2019/20 and, as resources become increasingly stretched, the Panel recognises that the Commissioner will need to make increasingly difficult and potentially contentious decisions. The Panel will seek assurances that decisions taken do not adversely impact Warwickshire's most vulnerable residents and that Warwickshire Police remain sufficiently resourced to continue to effectively deliver policing services for all residents.

Key Statistics 2014/15:



external representatives invited to make presentations to the Panel

5 Membership 2014/15

Warwickshire's Police and Crime Panel consists of five Warwickshire County Councillors and one Councillor from each of the five District/Borough areas of Warwickshire (North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby, Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick). There are also two co-opted independent (i.e. non-councillor) members.

The membership for 2014/15 was, as follows:



Chair – Councillor Dennis Harvey,
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council



Vice-Chair - Mr Robin Verso,
Independent member



Councillor Michael Coker,
Warwick District Council



Councillor Nicola Davies,
Warwickshire County Council



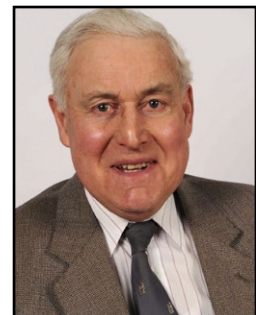
Councillor Peter Fowler,
Warwickshire County Council



Councillor Jenny Fradgley,
Warwickshire County Council



Mr Bob Malloy,
Independent member



Councillor Phillip Morris-Jones,
Warwickshire County Council



Councillor Peter Morson,
North Warwickshire Borough Council



Councillor Derek Poole,
Rugby Borough Council



Councillor Gillian Roache,
Stratford-upon-Avon District Council



Councillor June Tandy,
Warwickshire County Council

6 Getting Involved

You can keep up to date with the work of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel by visiting our website **www.warwickshire.gov.uk/policeandcrimepanel**

Listening to the views of local residents is an important part of the work of Panel. All meetings are open to the public and anyone who lives or works in Warwickshire is welcome to submit a question to either the Panel or the Police and Crime Commissioner. If you wish to submit a question, please submit your question in writing at least three working days in advance of the meeting using the contact details below:

Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

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