

Minutes of the meeting of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel held on 12 March 2013

Present:

Members of the Panel

Councillors:

Dennis Harvey	Nuneaton & Bedworth Council (Chair)
Michael Doody	Warwick District Council
Alan Farnell	Warwickshire County Council
David Johnston	Warwickshire County Council
Peter Morson	North Warwickshire Borough Council
Derek Poole	Rugby Borough Council
Gillian Roache	Stratford on Avon District Council
Helen Walton	Warwickshire County Council

Independent member:

Robin Verso

Police and Crime Commissioner's Office:

Ron Ball	Police and Crime Commissioner
Eric Wood	Deputy police and Crime Commissioner
Mark Gore	Interim Chief Executive
Dave Clarke	Treasurer
John McPhail	Policy Officer
Dave Stenning	Policy Officer

Warwickshire Police

Andy Parker	Chief Constable
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WCC Officers:

David Carter	Strategic Director, Resources (Monitoring officer for the Panel)
Jane Pollard	Head of Corporate Legal, Resources
Janet Purcell	Democratic Services Manager, Resources.

1. **General**

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Bob Malloy, Independent Member and Councillors Eithne Goode and Ray Sweet (Warwickshire County Council representatives).

The meeting was advised that County Councillor Ray Sweet was standing down from the Council. It was agreed that the Chair write to Councillor Sweet on behalf of the Panel to thank him for his support of the Panel.

(2) Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved

That the minutes of 7 February be approved as a correct record.

It was noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had written to the Chair in response to the Panel's response to his budget proposals. The letter from the PCC had been circulated to the Panel members.

(3) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Robin Verso declared an interest in item 3 on the agenda and left the meeting during discussion on this item.

2. Review of the Draft Police and Crime Plan

Mr Ron Ball, the Police and Crime Commissioner, outlined the approach he had taken in producing the draft plan and explained that the starting point had been the key objectives that Mr Ball had set out in his election manifesto, in summary to:

- Strengthen local policing
- Increase visibility of policing
- Ensure there is no reduction in officer numbers
- Concentrate on drug and alcohol abuse (as these are primary causes of crime)
- Have a responsible attitude to spending
- Improve communication and consultation
- Continue the commitment to the Strategic Alliance with West Mercia.

Ron Ball explained that he aimed for the Plan to be 'public facing' and had deliberately produced a plan that was more focused than many Police and Crime Plans being produced across the country.

Consultation on the Plan had included a variety of organisations, including local councils and voluntary groups and the Plan had been updated in the light of responses and would be subject to further amendments up to publication and launch in April. Such changes included specific reference to road safety, business crime and cyber crime and to ensuring active involvement in the national Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

Mr Ball assured the meeting that in future the process for developing the plan (and budget) would start earlier (in late summer) and this would allow more time for engagement and, in particular, discussions with this Panel.

The following points were raised by the Panel:

(1) Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)

A briefing note was circulated to the Panel setting out the respective powers of PCSOs and Special Constables.

Members questioned whether the powers of PCSOs would be extended to include the issue of fixed penalty notices to those who parked dangerously and caused obstruction outside schools.

The Chief Constable explained that he was reviewing all powers but that there was a complication in that deregulation meant some powers were now with others. It appeared that it was not possible to take back one power without taking back a whole 'package' of powers. Legal advice is being sought on this and one solution may be through local agreements. Mr Ball assured the meeting that this was being looked at and offered to report back in six months.

(2) PCC Office -Community engagement

Councillor Helen Walton expressed concern that the PCC would find it difficult to meet his commitment to attend all community forums and other groups.

Ron Ball responded that he did not consider he had over committed himself and that he had managed to attend all meetings that he had intended to, aside from the apology he had given to a meeting that evening. Eric Wood, Deputy PCC, added that the intention would be that the PCC and he would cover all forums by attending one meeting each over two years. In addition the Community Safety Ambassadors would attend every forum meeting and parish council meetings in their areas and would report to (and from) the PCC.

Councillor David Johnston asked for information on which other meetings the PCC would be attending and the frequency of these.

Ron Ball reported that a communications plan was being prepared and should be ready for the Panel in June.

(3) Proposed appointment of community safety ambassadors

Members questioned the need for the appointment of ambassadors as they considered this is the role of local councillors. The office of the

PCC could also obtain feedback on concerns of community forums from the neighbourhood teams who attended meetings.

Ron Ball explained that the ambassadors would be his 'eyes and ears' and they would be required to attend forums and produce reports and feedback. Eric Wood added that the ambassadors also had a wider role outside of forum meetings and would also engage with a broader range of voluntary organisations and the community than was currently represented at some forums. This proposal had been welcomed by voluntary groups, Neighbourhood Watch and Crimespotters.

(4) CCTV

Councillor Gillian Roache referred to the value of CCTVs in tackling anti social behaviour. The provision of these cameras represented a large part of the budget of district and borough councils and, although considered important, they were not a statutory requirement and could be vulnerable to cuts in the future as councils face increasing budget pressures. This point was echoed by Councillor Dennis Harvey.

Ron Ball agreed that the contribution of districts and boroughs should be recognised in the Plan, and this specific example made clear.

Andy Parker advised that the Police had taken 26% cut in budget and that they would find it difficult to provide CCTVs and appreciated the support and valuable partnership provided by the districts. Such positive partnership also allowed the Police to focus on the high harm causes that other agencies cannot focus on.

(5) Specific actions and targets

Robin Verso welcomed the consultation on the Plan but expressed disappointment at the lack of specifics (other than additional PCSOs, Special Constables and the ambassadors) and the resultant lack of targets/measures of expected outcomes.

The Panel agreed that this lack of specifics and targets would make it difficult for the Panel to undertake its role in holding the PCC to account.

Ron Ball circulated a paper setting out policing targets for 2013/14 and, in response to questions, assured the Panel that he considered the targets realistic in view of the amount of structural change taking place and reduced resources. Andy Parker explained that the focus was on reducing crime and catching criminals rather than detection rates with activity focused on three priority areas within Leamington, Nuneaton and Rugby. There is also a target to maintain user satisfaction levels at 82% in spite of reduced resources.

The Panel was advised that targets were for just one year, in line with the Police budget which was only assured on an annual basis.

Members suggested that further years be added in line with the PCC's medium term financial plan, albeit the Plan may have to change in line with future financial circumstances.

Eric Wood added that, as with other PCCs across the country, they did not have a performance framework that goes beyond policing. This was due to the time period in which plans were being produced but information was being pulled together and would take account of the CSPs by the end of the month. The Panel was warned however that it would probably not be completely finished by the time of publication of the plan.

(6) Military Covenant

Councillor Alan Farnell requested that the Plan give recognition to the part played by the Military Covenant of which the Police were a part and ensure outcomes are monitored. Ron Ball agreed that this would be included.

(7) Health

Robin Verso referred to the need for close working with Health, and in particular mental health services. He added that the Criminal Justice and Mental Health Liaison Service had only 2.5 psychiatric nurses and that this and more is essential. The PCC was asked how he was ensuring a long term relationship with Health.

Ron Ball replied that his first step was to seek a seat on the Health and Well Being Board and that he needed to identify who to approach as the new NHS structure comes into place. Councillor Gillian Roache supported the need to ensure that the funding of this small service is continued by the CCGs who would become responsible for it from 1 April.

(8) Finance/budget

Councillor Helen Walton asked what is being done to minimise police overtime as this appeared high. Andy Parker explained that police overtime allows flexibility of policing and is more effective than making additional appointments. The level of overtime is, however, carefully monitored.

Councillor Michael Doody asked whether the PCC would be agreeable to meeting with a small working group of the Panel (three members) to look in more detail at the budget.

Ron Ball welcomed the suggestion.

Conclusion

Ron Ball thanked the Panel for their contributions and reported that he would be launching the final version of the plan in Stratford on 8 April (10.00 am).

3. Allowances for Independent members

Robin Verso left the meeting for this item.

The Panel discussed the position in relation to allowances, noting that the Home Office funding did not cover payment of allowances, other than expenses. None of the constituent councils paid any allowance to their member(s) on the panel.

The Panel agreed to note the report.

4. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

5. Future Meetings

The following meetings have been arranged:

Friday 14 June – **2.30pm**

Friday 27 September – 10.00 am

Friday 22 November – 10.00 am

The meeting rose at 4.15 pm

Chair