

Minutes of the meeting of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel held on 14 June 2013

Present:

Members of the Panel

Councillors:

Dennis Harvey	Nuneaton & Bedworth Council (Chair)
Michael Coker	Warwick District Council (substitute for Cllr Doody)
Nicola Davies	Warwickshire County Council
Peter Fowler	Warwickshire County Council
Jenny Fradgley	Warwickshire County Council (substitute for Cllr Rolfe)
Phillip Morris- Jones	Warwickshire County Council
Peter Morson	North Warwickshire Borough Council
Carolyn Robbins	Rugby Borough Council (substitute for Cllr Poole)
Gillian Roache	Stratford on Avon District Council
June Tandy	Warwickshire County Council

Independent members:

Bob Malloy
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

Warwickshire Police

Andy Parker Chief Constable

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.
Virginia Rennie	Head of Budget and Technical, Resources

1. Appointment of Chair

Councillor Peter Morson proposed Councillor Dennis Harvey for chair and was seconded by Councillor June Tandy.

Councillor Gillian Roache proposed Councillor Michael Doody for chair and was seconded by Councillor Peter Fowler.

A vote was taken and Councillor Dennis Harvey and Councillor Michael Doody received 5 votes each. The votes being equal the current chair used his casting vote for Councillor Dennis Harvey.

Resolved

That Councillor Dennis Harvey be appointed Chair of the Police and Crime Panel for 2013/14.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor Gillian Roache proposed that Councillor Doody be Vice Chair and was seconded by Councillor Michael Coker. There were no other nominations.

Resolved

That Councillor Michael Doody be appointed Vice Chair of the Police and Crime Panel for 2013/14.

3. Welcome to new members and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed new members of the Panel following the County Council elections. Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Michael Doody (Councillor Michael Coker present as substitute); Derek Poole (Councillor Carolyn Robbins present as substitute) and Kate Rolfe (Councillor Jenny Fradgley present as substitute).

4. Members Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

5 Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved

That the minutes of 12 March 2013 be approved as a correct record.

6. Appointment of Chief Constable.

Mr Ron Ball, the Police and Crime Commissioner, outlined the process he had undertaken and the reasons for his decision to extend Andy Parker's existing fixed term contract for two years. Ron Ball had started discussions regarding the appointment before Christmas, conscious of the need to secure the leadership of the force and the advice of the HMIC and the Home Office. The Home Office had confirmed on 18 April that it would be acceptable to extend the contract of the existing Acting Chief Constable in line with Regulation 11 of the Police Regulations 2003 (as amended). He had also had assurance that Keith Bristow would not be returning to the position of Chief Constable.

Ron Ball advised that he had considered a full recruitment process but this would have led to a period of uncertainty at a time when it is very important to maintain stability and continuity in the leadership of Warwickshire Police and the Alliance. He had the highest regard for Andy Parker's leadership of the Warwickshire Police and had found this view widely shared within the Force and across agencies and organisations. Ron Ball explained that he had decided to have an interview panel (of the PCC, DPCC and Ms Liz Stafford, Chief Executive of the Warwickshire Probation Trust as an independent member) to give assurance that Andy Parker met a number of criteria, including that he would provide strong leadership as part of the Strategic Alliance in a period of considerable change. The Panel had been satisfied that Andy Parker should be appointed.

Panel members expressed their support for the appointment of Andy Parker as Chief Constable and offered their congratulations.

Questions from the Panel

Bob Malloy expressed concern that he had learned of the appointment through press coverage, rather than through communication or involvement of this panel. He added that some appointments across the country had included a panel member as an observer at the interview panel and asked whether Ron Ball would consider this for future panels

Ron Ball replied that he had considered this but had concluded this could compromise the position of the panel, having taken legal advice.

Councillor June Tandy sought clarification on when the appointment would become permanent rather than a short term contract.

Ron Ball replied that the contract is for two years but that he would be looking for full time beyond that.

Councillor Gillian Roache asked why the Panel had not been advised of the PCC's approach and decision before the appointment had been formalised.

Ron Ball explained that he had called the Chair of the Panel and proposed that in future he would have a Chair and officers meeting to avoid misunderstandings.

Robin Verso asked whether employment law applied that would mean that there is a point whereby consecutive temporary contracts amount to a permanent appointment.

Ron Ball explained that this point had been checked with the Home Office. Dave Clarke reminded the meeting that police officer employment is covered by Police Regulations and other employment law does not always apply.

Councillor Gillian Roache referred to the terms and conditions of appointment and asked whether the Chief Constable would use 1st Class Rail.

Andy Parker assured the meeting that he would not travel 1st Class and would also not use a driver unless there were exceptional circumstances.

Councillor June Tandy asked Andy Parker to give examples of having to make unpopular decisions. Andy Parker replied that he had many examples – from the downsizing, to changing shift system and daily decisions.

Councillor Morris-Jones asked whether it was still the case that the police car could be used for private purposes. Andy Parker replied that this is the case but that the car is insured by himself.

In response to a question from Councillor Peter Morson, Andy Parker gave assurance that there is a strong network that was used to ensure the Force is being responsive to the needs of hard to reach communities.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, thanked the PCC for his report and welcomed the PCC's proposal for informal meetings between the Chair, PCC and officers to ensure improved communication.

7. Consultation on proposal to create three new Local Justice Areas covering West Midlands and Warwickshire.

The Panel considered a draft response to the West Midlands and Warwickshire's Justices' Clerk consultation.

Robin Verso expressed concern that there was no consistency in the geographical areas being chosen for the management of different functions. For instance the reorganisation of the Probation Service meant that Warwickshire and West Mercia would handle low to medium level offenders; East and west Midlands handle high level offenders in clusters but we do not know what they will be yet.

If the focus is on Warwickshire and West Mercia why have they proposed a different model for the justice service? Coventry is in a different police and probation service.

Bob Malloy's concern was that, as courts become specialised (it was likely that family will be concentrated in Nuneaton and criminal in Leamington) rather than shared as at present then this will present difficulties for services such as trading standards officers having to go to different areas but also for families and family advocates who may have to travel to courts in different areas. Councillor Coker added that this would impact on families and add to the stress of attending court.

It was agreed that these comments be included in the response. It was noted that any further consultation would be in relation to any proposed court closures.

8. Police and Crime Commissioner – update on Alliance and Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Strategic Alliance

Ron Ball reported that he tracked progress with the Alliance through his regular monitoring meetings and that all indications were that it is on track. Ron Ball added that he also spoke to station officers for their views and whilst there were naturally some who were not totally happy with the changes, there was realisation that the Alliance has to work. Ron Ball commented that he continues to be asked whether there will be a merger of the forces but in his view that could not happen before 2016 and that strengthening and deepening the alliance would bring the most benefit. In his view a merger, if wanted, should only be achieved with the democratic agreement of people of Warwickshire.

Councillor Nicola Davies asked what the objectives of the Alliance were and how different approaches on an issue by each Force are reconciled. Are decisions based on cost or quality? Ron Ball explained that the driver for the Alliance was savings and doing things once instead of twice. He did not, however, consider cost and quality were necessarily opposed.

Ron Ball commended the support he was getting from Council officers and in particular that given by the communications officer following the murder in West Mercia.

Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Ron Ball reported that he had been delighted with the quality of people coming forward to take on the role of Community Safety Ambassadors. Interviews had been held on 13 June and more would be held the following week. Induction will take place in July with a view to people being in place for the September round of community forums.

Councillor Jenny Fradgley asked what the criteria for success was for the ambassadors and Councillor June Tandy warned that there could be confusion if both the local constable, members and an ambassador looking at the same issue.

Ron Ball replied that the ambassadors were 'eyes and ears' and would be the one individual who would liaise with the safer neighbourhood teams and other bodies in that area. They would be expected to get to know their area and provide quarterly reports on what is going on. He added that he had liaised with Neighbourhood Watch in setting up the scheme and that they were distinct from volunteers in that they are required to produce reports. He gave his assurance that their role was not to be involved in solving issues but merely to report. He also expected there to be a mechanism for sharing amongst the ambassadors, across county or across areas.

Innovation Fund

There have been £300k worth of ideas coming forward and he expects to fund 70% of these.

PCC - national links

The PCCs have a national association. Eric Wood will be attending these. The PCCs are involved in the development of the National Police Air Service which will provide potential for savings as well as improve service.

Ron Ball will be attending a sub-committee at the House of Commons to give input regarding the proposed ASBO legislation.

Special constables, PCSOs

Eric Wood reported that the calibre of people coming forward to be special constables is very high and he would encourage panel members to attend inauguration ceremonies so that they can meet the special constables.

Councillor Phillip Morris-Jones asked how the PCC was tackling public confusion over the number of types of officer and volunteer. Eric Wood replied that they were explaining the roles to the public. Recruitment in police continues but retention is a big issue. The Coventry University college are launching a degree on policing following on from HNC and HND which provides an opportunity to encourage special constables to become trained and retain them as specials or become full time PCs.

Councillor Peter Fowler referred to the proposal to produce some information regarding the structure of SNTs. Andy Parker gave assurance that there would be information available on the new structure in October.

County Council

Eric Wood reported that there was agreement for the PCC to attend the full County Council meeting in September which will provide an opportunity to brief members on the structure of the Alliance and how it will function and

to outline key performance indicators. All members of the Panel will be invited to that meeting.

Communication Plan

Councillor Nicola Davies sought assurance that the communications plan would be made available to the panel. Ron Ball replied that he was waiting to get the community safety ambassadors in place before completing the plan and that it would then be brought to the next meeting of the Panel.

The Chair thanked the PCC for his report. It was agreed that previous papers be circulated to new members.

9. Appointment of Chief Executive

The advertisement for the post of Chief Executive for the PCC Office had been circulated and is available on the PCC website. Ron Ball explained that he had considered the possibility of a joint chief executive with west Mercia but concluded that there should be a chief executive to look after the interests of Warwickshire. Ron Ball apologised that he had not circulated the job description earlier. In response to a question about the requirement of the applicants to have public service experience he stated his view that this was important.

The Chair left the meeting at this point (3.50pm) and Councillor Michael Coker took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

10. Future Meetings/work programme

The following meetings have been arranged:

Friday 27 September – 10.00 am – To include Communication Plan

Friday 22 November – 10.00 am

Eric Wood referred to the intention to appoint a group of members working group to look at the budget. A choice of dates will be circulated to the Panel.

The meeting rose at 3.55 pm

Chair