



Report to the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

3rd February 2014

Police and Crime Plan 2013 - 2017

Introduction

In April 2013, following discussion with the Police and Crime Panel, I published my Police and Crime Plan which set out my priorities for policing and reducing crime for the period 2013 to 2017.

I believe that the priorities set out in that Plan are broadly the right ones. However, over the course of my first year in office I have been listening to people across the county and looking at developments nationally and locally and it is timely to undertake a review of those priorities. I am not proposing a substantial rewrite of the Plan and there is no requirement to do so but I am proposing to focus in particular on the following areas:-

1.0 Alcohol Misuse

- 1.1 I intend to make a particular priority the very significant contribution that alcohol misuse makes to anti-social and criminal behaviour including domestic violence and abuse. It is estimated that more than 40% of recorded crime is alcohol related. The conference organised on behalf of the Safer and Stronger Board by the County Council, provided a useful discussion of this area of work and I will be working with partners to look at how we can improve still further the Alcohol Implementation Plan.

2.0 Violence against Women and Girls

- 2.1 Tackling sexual abuse and violence has always been a priority. I welcome however the work of the County Council to develop a wider strategy to counter violence against women and girls and implementing that strategy will be a particular focus of partnership working next year.
- 2.2 A particular focus will be domestic violence where national research suggests only 40% of domestic abuse incidents are reported to the Police. In Warwickshire, the number of reported cases ranges from 7000 – 8000 of which 10% are judged to be 'high risk'. To encourage reporting it is vital that victims have confidence in the Police and partners working in this area. I will be working with partners to organise support for victims, including

Independent Domestic Violence Advisers who work to empower women to change their circumstances and escape abuse, to support the 'Sanctuary' scheme to protect victims of high risk abuse, and to further develop outreach services for victims, work with perpetrators and the provision of alarms.

3.0 Cyber Crime

3.1 Recorded crime in the county continues to fall. However the level of 'cyber crime', crime connected to the Internet, is rising significantly. Given the nature and complexity of internet crime, which very often crosses national boundaries, prevention in this area is key. Informing the public, particularly older and younger people, how to protect themselves from internet crime and what to do if they are a victim of cyber crime will be a major priority for the coming year and the life of the plan. I will be working with my counterpart in West Mercia and with national agencies as well as local partners to develop an effective strategy to help counter this growing threat.

4.0 Rural Crime

4.1 In a county with large rural areas I have received many representations not least most recently from representatives of the North Warwickshire and Stratford-upon-Avon Councils about the need to focus more on crime in the countryside. Rural communities in West Mercia report similar problems. I have agreed therefore to work with the Commissioner in West Mercia and the two Chief Constables to develop and invest in a rural crime strategy to tackle crime in the countryside. I am already considering proposals for a rural crime partnership to help spearhead this work.

5.0 Business Crime

5.1 Similarly, I have received a number of representations about Business Crime, including retail crime. I am therefore proposing to develop, again with West Mercia, a new joint business crime strategy with appropriate investment, to focus on helping businesses to protect themselves against crime.

6.0 Police Integrity

6.1 Public trust and confidence in the integrity of the Police is essential to effective policing. I believe that the standard of conduct in Warwickshire Police and across the Alliance is very high but we cannot be complacent. I am proposing therefore to look at ways in which to ensure the highest possible standards of conduct of officers and police staff in Warwickshire. These include a proposal to establish a panel of suitably qualified members of the public to help me monitor the handling of complaints against the Police and to form an Ethics Committee to oversee standards of conduct, as recommended by HMIC.

6.2 In addition I will work with Warwickshire Police to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of their complaint handling procedures.

7.0 Safeguarding

- 7.1 One of my statutory duties is to have an overview of arrangements to protect children and vulnerable adults. Following a summit of agencies involved in child protection in the Autumn, I have been looking at the benefits of establishing a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which brings together in one location representatives of the various statutory agencies including the Police to ensure a coordinated approach to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. I have decided as result of that work that such a MASH should be established in Warwickshire and I will be working with partners over the next few months to do so and ensure as far as we can that our arrangements in the county to tackle the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children and more generally to protect children and vulnerable adults are as robust as possible.

8.0 Integrated Offender Management

- 8.1 Working with ex-offenders and breaking the cycle of re-offending is central to reducing crime. For example, it is a key strand of Operation X, the proactive programme of policing focusing on high harm causers. Changes in this area of work will follow the Government's proposal as set out in the document 'Transforming Rehabilitation'. Ensuring that the good work and collaboration between partners in Warwickshire is protected and enhanced in this period of change will be a major concern for me over the next twelve months.

9.0 Support for Victims

- 9.1 The needs of victims should be at the heart of the Criminal Justice System and has always been a priority for me. From October 2014, responsibility for the commissioning of much of the support available to victims will be passed to Police and Crime Commissioners. This represents a significant piece of work for my Office and I will be working with all the agencies in the Criminal Justice System, including the Courts Service, to ensure that the needs of victims are paramount and that victims and witnesses receive the support they need in line with the requirements of the Victim Code.

10.0 Strategic Alliance

- 10.1 A new model of policing across the two force areas in the Alliance of West Mercia and Warwickshire was introduced in October 2013. I will continue to monitor carefully the impact of those changes on policing in Warwickshire. The Alliance has brought significant benefits in terms of achieving savings and it has also ensured the resilience and effectiveness of policing. We need now to continue to strengthen the Alliance and to map out its future direction over the next two or three years, although I have made clear that I will not accept any proposal for the merger of the two forces in my term of office before there has been a proper democratic debate with the people of Warwickshire. I will be working with the two Chief Constables and with the Commissioner in West Mercia to develop that future vision.

I would welcome the comments of the Police and Crime Panel