

**Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel  
held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014**

**Present:**

**Members of the Panel**

Councillors:

Michael Doody	Warwick District Council
Dennis Harvey (Chair)	Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Peter Fowler	Warwickshire County Council
Jenny Fradgley	Warwickshire County Council
Phillip Morris-Jones	Warwickshire County Council
Peter Morson	North Warwickshire Borough Council
Gillian Roache	Stratford-upon-Avon District Council
June Tandy	Warwickshire County Council
Helen Walton	Rugby Borough Council

Co-opted Independent members

Bob Malloy  
Robin Verso (Vice Chair)

**Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

Ron Ball	Police and Crime Commissioner
Dave Clarke	Treasurer
Chris Lewis	Policy Officer
Rob Phillips	Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Chief Inspector Slemensek	Warwickshire Police
Eric Wood	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

**Warwickshire County Council Officers**

Georgina Atkinson	Democratic Services Team Leader
John Betts	Head of Finance
David Carter	Strategic Director, Resources Group
Andy Hickmott	Chief Fire Officer
Jack Linstead	Communications Officer
Jane Pollard	Governance Advisor
Janet Purcell	Democratic Services Manager

**Members of the Public**

Two members from Warwickshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

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**1. General**

**(1) Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Coker (Warwick District Council; Councillor Michael Doody was substitute member), Councillor Derek Poole (Rugby Borough Council; Councillor Helen Walton was substitute member) and Councillor Nicola Davies (Warwickshire County Council).

**(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Robin Verso declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that he was the Chair of the Warwickshire Probation Trust.

**(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013**

The Police and Crime Panel agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013 be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

**2. Appointment of Vice-Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Roache and seconded by Councillor Tandy that Robin Verso be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Police and Crime Panel for the remainder of 2013/14. This motion was agreed unanimously by the Panel.

**3. Report of the Budget Working Group**

The Panel considered the report and minutes of the Budget Working Group meeting that had taken place on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Robin Verso, who had chaired the meeting of the Working Group, referred to the minutes of the meeting and the key questions raised by members in respect of the proposed budget and Medium term Financial Plan.

Members were advised that following the resignation of Councillor Michael Doody (Warwick District Council), Cllr Gillian Roache had been the temporary substitute Conservative member on the Budget Working Group and had attended the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The Conservative position on the Budget Working Group now needed to be reappointed.

The Police and Crime Panel agreed:

- 1) To note the minutes of the Budget Working Group meeting; and
- 2) That Councillor Gillian Roache be appointed as the Conservative member on the Budget Working Group.

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### 4. Proposed Local Police Precept 2014/15

The Panel considered the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed budget precept and budget proposals which had been published on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014. It was noted that the Panel was required by the Police and Reform Social Responsibility Act 2011 to review and make a report to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) on his proposed precept by 8<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and that the Panel had an option to veto the precept.

The Police and Crime Commissioner considered that the decision not to increase the precept in 2013/14 had been correct. However, key factors such as the top-slicing of the collaboration fund and a £9 million (in Warwickshire) savings target by 2018/19, had put additional pressures on the budget and therefore he believed that a 1.99% increase was essential. He referred to the current uncertainty regarding the precept referendum limit set by central government and explained that although a 1.99% increase was proposed at present, he would fix the precept below a lower referendum limit, once confirmed. There was therefore no risk of a local referendum on the policing precept.

Members of the Police and Crime Panel asked a number of questions as set out below.

#### Base Budget

- 1) Robin Verso requested an outline of the rationale for the 1.99% increase; whether any other options had been considered; and what course of action the Police and Crime Commissioner would take if the precept referendum limit was reduced to, for example, 1.49%?

In response, the Commissioner explained that the Council Tax Freeze Grant of one per cent was considered insufficient for sustaining resources. He added that a 1.99% increase would amount to £0.01 per day increase per household for a Band D property, which he considered barely noticeable for the household; however, a decision to not increase the precept would leave a shortfall in the Base Budget of approximately £3 million, which would ultimately have a significant impact on service delivery. In light of this, the Police and Crime Commissioner considered that the proposed increase was reasonable and essential.

The Commissioner accepted that criticism was likely for any precept increase and he therefore considered that an increase to the referendum limit would be worthwhile. He explained that at present, the Reserves were in a healthy position and would be substantially drawn down during the Medium Term Financial Plan to fund a range of crime prevention projects, such as Operation X. The income from the precept increase would ensure that the use of Reserves was at a healthy and sustainable level and the Commissioner believed that it was reasonable for the public to make a very small contribution towards those projects through the precept increase.

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He added that the intention was to increase the precept to the referendum limit imposed by central government. A revised limit of 1.5% would require an additional £800,000 savings over the Medium term Financial Plan.

- 2) Councillor Roache asked a question regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner's Revenue Budget Consultation.

The Commissioner advised that the consultation, which had run from 13<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014, had been advertised during his interviews on BBC Coventry and Warwickshire and had also been published on the OPCC's (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) website. He had also consulted the District and Borough Councils and Community Safety Partnerships. There had been four responses to the consultation – one response was in support of the proposed precept increase and three objected to the increase. The Panel was advised that the consultation had been relatively cost free, using officer time to prepare the consultation and the publicity had been free of charge through radio interviews.

- 3) Bob Malloy referred to the commitment that had been made by the West Mercia and Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner's to align the precept increase across the Alliance. He asked if there had been any indication how the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel might respond to the proposed precept and requested assurances regarding the calculation of the budget formula if there was an increase in the Warwickshire precept, but not in West Mercia.

In response, the Commissioner explained that it would be very unfortunate if alignment could not be achieved and he agreed that it was imperative that the increase in the Warwickshire precept be allocated to Warwickshire-based projects, such as Operation X. He added that the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel had scheduled its budget precept meeting for 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and indications from its Budget Working Group had indicated support to the proposed precept increase.

- 4) Robin Verso referred to the Alliance Savings Plans and requested an outline of how the savings were being achieved without affecting operational policing.

The Commissioner explained that the formation of the Alliance had provided many cost-saving opportunities and that, despite significant savings, the performance of both forces under the Alliance had been sustained. For example, the Safer Neighbourhood Teams had been strengthened and the number of Special Constables had increased. He accepted that the implementation of the Alliance and the new policing model had been challenging and that a number of issues which had been identified, such as the redeployment of staff, were currently being reviewed.

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The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner added that the 2015/16 savings would focus on the Enabling Services section of the Alliance, which included finance, HR and victims/witnesses services. The impact of savings was regularly monitored by the Alliance Governance Group, which included an analysis of pressure points to identify where adjustments may be required in order to maintain positive performance.

The Police and Crime Panel requested a report on the implementation of the 'Blueprint' model.

- 5) Councillor Walton referred to Appendix B(i) to the budget report and queried the projected increase in the level of staff allowances from £930,000 in 2013/14 to £1.767 million in 2014/15. Councillor Walton also requested clarification on the expenditure for Community Safety Ambassadors.

Dave Clarke, Treasurer, explained that the significant increase in staff allowances was due to the amalgamation of the West Mercia and Warwickshire allowance budget from 2014/15 onwards; therefore the £1.767 million represented the cost to the Alliance. Due to the amalgamation, budget comparisons between 2013/14 and 2014/15 could be misleading; however, from hereon in the budgets would be accurately apportioned and a more meaningful comparison could be achieved.

With regard to Community Safety Ambassadors, the Commissioner explained that there was a £130,000 budget allocation across the Alliance, of which £30,000 was allocated to the Warwickshire Ambassadors scheme. West Mercia's allocation was significantly higher due to the wider geographical spread of the area and associated staff support costs.

- 6) The Chair referred to Appendix B(ii) of the budget report and requested clarification on how the 6.28% reduction in the Protective Services budget would be managed without affecting service delivery.

The Commissioner gave assurances that, based on the impact of previous savings and budget reduction, performance would not be detrimentally affected. Performance was one of the key features of his regular meetings with the Chief Constable and he believed that any issues relating to performance would be identified and addressed promptly.

Dave Clarke added that the first two stages of savings had focused on the rationalisation of management by amalgamating roles across the Alliance and the sharing of premises. Those savings had created the budget reductions, as outlined in Appendix B(ii). He added that the next two stages would focus on the integration of IT and the rationalisation of processes, which were more challenging to achieve but ultimately would provide further savings opportunities.

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- 7) Councillor Doody requested clarification on the allocation of funding to Community Safety Partnerships and why this had been calculated on a population basis, rather than according to crime statistics.

The Police and Crime Commissioner explained that following representations made by the Community Safety Partnerships, the allocation of funding would be reviewed. He would report back the key findings and any changes to a future meeting of the Police and Crime Panel.

- 8) Councillor Doody expressed concern with the Police and Crime Commissioner's decision to draw down £16.7 million from Reserves whilst also proposing a 1.99% increase in the precept. Councillor Doody was not reassured that this demonstrated budget prudence.

In response, the Commissioner explained that the precept increase was a necessity to alleviate the speed and level at which the Reserves would be drawn down over the Medium Term Financial Plan. In reference to his office, the Commissioner considered that the level of staffing was now appropriate, given the additional responsibilities for crime prevention and the commissioning of services which were not features of the disbanded Police Authority. In addition, due to the public facing role of the Commissioner, there were key duties relating to Freedom of Information requests and investigating complaints. The Commissioner invited members of the Police and Crime Panel to visit his office and speak to members of staff regarding roles and responsibilities.

- 9) Councillor Morris-Jones requested an outline of the rationale for the £2.5 million allocation to tackle rural, business and cyber crime and how the impact of expenditure would be assessed.

The Panel was advised by the Commissioner that issues regarding rural and business crime had been raised regularly through various consultations and forums. Rural crime had been recognised as a national issue and 18 Police and Crime Commissioners had recently established a Rural Crime Network.

The Commissioner explained that cyber crime had been recognised nationally as a significant issue that was increasing at a considerable rate. He therefore considered it an obligation to seek to address this for Warwickshire residents. Because detection was extremely challenging, the project would focus primarily on the prevention of cyber crime by raising public awareness and providing education on Internet safety.

With regard to estimated costs, the Commissioner explained that costs had been calculated in partnership with the Alliance and progress would be regularly monitored by the Chief Constable.

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- 10) Councillor Walton requested clarification on the Police and Crime Commissioner's rationale for the use of Reserves and the potential impact of a reduction in the referendum cap on any precept increase.

The Commissioner stated that he had inherited a sound budget position and wanted to ensure that the budget was equally as secure at the end of his term. He believed that the Medium Term Financial Plan allowed for a prudent use of Reserves over a five-year period.

Dave Clarke added that a decision had been made to backload savings until the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2015/16 had been announced. Assumptions on future grant settlements had been made on the basis of projections by the Institute of Fiscal Studies; however, there was no guarantee that an incoming government in 2015 would continue the same spending policies as the existing government. It was therefore considered that backloading certain savings, such as those relating to staffing, until greater assurances could be made about future grant settlements was the most prudent approach.

The Commissioner agreed to the Panel's request that an informal briefing be provided regarding the formation of the policing budget.

- 11) Councillor Fowler asked a question regarding the use of the Home Office grant for commissioning victims services.

In response, the Commissioner confirmed that this had been granted on a one-year basis and therefore the post within his office was a one-year contract.

Following the discussion, the Police and Crime Panel was reminded that it could give a view regarding the proposed precept, make recommendations and veto if considered appropriate. Councillor Doody proposed that the Police and Crime Panel veto the proposed precept, in light of his concerns regarding the use of Reserves and the proposal to increase the precept by 1.99%. This was seconded by Councillor Walton. The motion was lost on a vote of two for and nine against.

The Police and Crime Panel agreed:

- 1) To note the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed 1.99% increase in precept and agree that a summary of the Panel's views be put in a report to the Commissioner;
- 2) That a report of the Panel's discussion be prepared and forwarded to the Police and Crime Commissioner by 8<sup>th</sup> February 2013 (*A copy of the report is appended to these minutes*);
- 3) That a report on the implementation of the 'Blueprint' model be presented at the next meeting; and

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- 4) To request that an informal briefing be provided for Panel members regarding the formation of the budget.

**5. Refresh of the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17**

The Police and Crime Commissioner explained that the revised Police and Crime Plan 2013-17 would be based on the version as agreed in 2013. There would be no substantial changes and only a refresh of the key priorities.

A discussion took place with regard to rural crime. The Commissioner confirmed that this would focus on “crime in rural areas” and had been identified as a priority following representations from the public, Community Safety Partnerships and the analysis of crime statistics. Councillor Roache welcomed the Commissioner’s commitment to addressing rural crime.

The Police and Crime Panel agreed:

- 1) To note the refreshed priorities for the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17; and
- 2) Request statistical information regarding business and rural crime.

**6. Recent Activity and Decisions Taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to the Community Safety Ambassadors (CSAs) scheme and reported that, to date, there were 26 CSAs across the county. Overall, he considered the scheme to be positive and that the majority of CSAs had a full understanding and appreciation of their role in providing local intelligence regarding crime and disorder issues. He explained that there had been a few minor issues, which had been anticipated given the originality of the scheme, and one CSA had been dismissed from the role.

Councillor Tandy suggested that an informal discussion between Councillors and the Police and Crime Commissioner would be useful to discuss the issues that had been reported, particularly regarding clarification and public understanding of the CSA role.

The Commissioner accepted that the initial launch of the CSAs could have been improved and therefore a re-launch of the scheme would be undertaken to raise public awareness and provide greater clarification regarding the role. Councillor Fradgley expressed concern at the impact of a public re-launch, given the attendance levels at Community Forums, and considered that the scheme was a good idea but had little capacity to work well.

In response to a question raised, the Commissioner clarified that the role of the CSAs at Community Forum meetings was to listen and observe and not to answer questions from the public. The role was one of a number of mechanisms for gathering local intelligence regarding crime and disorder



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issues across the county. He added that he also gained intelligence from Community Safety Partnerships and elected members, which would be combined with information from the CSAs.

The Chair considered that the scheme may be difficult to achieve in urban areas and that public awareness and perception of the role was a key issue that would need to be addressed.

The Police and Crime Panel agreed to note the recent activity and decisions taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

*The Chair left the meeting at this point (4.45 p.m.) and the Vice Chair took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.*

### **7. Staffing of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Panel was provided with an outline of the new staffing arrangements for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Members were reminded that Mark Gore had been the Interim Chief Executive until the appointment of Neil Hewison in October 2013. Since then, Mark Gore had provided temporary support until the three recently recruited Policy Officers had commenced in post and would continue to do so during a temporary period of leave by the Chief Executive, to ensure that there was adequate support for the new employees. It was reported that one member of staff had commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014 and the remaining two would start on 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014. An additional post, which was funded by the Home Office for commissioning victims services, had been awarded on a one-year contract. There was also a 0.6 FTE Policy Officer post for supporting additional responsibilities.

The Commissioner gave assurances that the new staffing structure for the office was at the correct level, given the level of additional responsibilities for crime prevention.

A discussion took place with regard to the District and Borough Council's responsibility for crime prevention. The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner advised that although the additional crime responsibilities of the Commissioner did not diminish those of the local authorities, it was recognised that these were non-statutory responsibilities for local authorities and were at risk of being reduced, in light of increasing budgetary pressures. He stressed the importance of partnership working between the Commissioner and the District and Borough Councils to ensure that services to the public were maintained.

The Police and Crime Panel agreed to note the report.

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**8. Special Constables**

The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the report and explained that there had been a positive number of Special Constable applications from a diverse range of people.

Councillor Morris-Jones considered Special Constables to be the backbone of volunteering services and stressed the importance of assigning useful and interesting work to them. He referred to an annual event that was held previously to celebrate the positive work that had been undertaken by Special Constables.

A discussion took place with regard to the Opinion Survey of Special Constables that had been undertaken in December 2013 and January 2014. There was concern that the response rate of 11% was low and whether the results could be considered as statistically valid or representative. Chief Inspector Slemensek advised that the survey feedback had provided useful ideas regarding improvements to the support and training of Special Constables. A detailed action plan had been created, which would be implemented and reviewed by the Special Constabulary Steering Group. The plan included key actions, such as effective forward planning of workload for Special Constables and the provision of refresher training.

With regard to public awareness, Chief Inspector Slemensek advised the Panel that a list of the statutory powers of Special Constables was available on the Warwickshire Police web site. Communication would be targeted across wider groups and networks, alongside good news stories to promote the value of Special Constables.

To conclude, the Commissioner reported that from September 2015, 14 young people from school Year 11 would be recruited as cadets, based on the existing scheme in West Mercia. The role would include two hours training per week for a two-year period.

The Police and Crime Panel agreed:

- 1) To note the report; and
- 2) That the Police and Crime Commissioner invite a number of Special Constables to a future meeting of the Panel to share their experiences and views of the service.

**9. Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items on this occasion.

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**10. Updated Action Plan and Future Meetings 2014/15**

The Police and Crime Panel referred to the Action Plan document which had been designed to assist the Panel in the monitoring of recommendations and requests that it had made either to the County Council or to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The document would be regularly updated and presented to each Panel meeting, to enable members to track progress and determine whether any further action is required.

The Police and Crime Panel agreed to:

- 1) Note the updated Action Plan;
- 2) Hold an additional meeting in March 2014 as an Annual Work Programme meeting;
- 3) Defer agreement on the proposed future meeting dates/times for 2014/15 to the meeting scheduled for March 2014; and
- 4) Schedule an informal budget briefing for the Panel in November 2014.

**11. Report Containing Confidential or Exempt Information**

The Police and Crime Panel agreed to pass the following resolution: *“That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the item below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.”*

**Complaints**

The Panel agreed that as the Chief Executive of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office was not in attendance at the meeting, the item be deferred until the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.

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Chairman

## **Report of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel Response to Police and Crime Commissioner Proposed Precept 2014/15**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel (PCP) is required by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to review and make a report to the Police and Crime Commissioner on the proposed local police precept by 8<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The Panel has the option to veto the precept at this stage. The Commissioner issued his proposed precept by the required deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014, along with budget proposals. The Panel considered the proposals at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014 and agreed to note the proposed 1.99% increase in precept and not to exercise a veto. The Panel reached its conclusion after questioning the Commissioner and with the Commissioner's assurance on some key points raised by the Panel.
- 1.2 The minutes of the meeting (attached at Appendix A) outlines the questions put by the Panel and the responses of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This report summarises the key points raised which the Panel wish the Commissioner to take into account over the coming year and in preparation for future year's budgets.

### **2.0 Budget Information**

- 2.1 At the time of the meeting, the Police and Crime Panel understood the difficult position of considering and setting the local policing precept without knowing the precept referendum limit. The Panel understood that although a 1.99% increase was proposed, the Commissioner would fix the precept below the referendum limit, once confirmed. The Panel therefore accepted that there was no risk of a local referendum on the policing precept. Subsequent to the meeting, the actual referendum limit was set at increases below 2%, indicating that the original proposal considered by the Panel remained valid.
- 2.2 The Panel is reassured by the Commissioner that in the event of a precept increase in Warwickshire, but not one in West Mercia, the formula for splitting costs between the two areas will be revisited so that the additional precept income is secured for Warwickshire-based projects and services.
- 2.3 The Panel notes the Commissioner's commitment to securing a sound budget position at the end of his term and that the use of Reserves, the implementation of savings plans across the Alliance and a precept increase are the Commissioner's approach to achieving that position. As part of this, the Panel acknowledges the decision made to backload savings until the outcome of the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) has been announced.
- 2.4 The Panel is assured by the Commissioner's confidence that the formation of the Alliance has provided many cost-saving opportunities without a detrimental impact on performance and service delivery. The Panel notes the Commissioner's commitment to monitoring performance and to ensuring that

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the Chief Constable takes rapid action if there is any deterioration in performance.

- 2.5 There was discussion at the meeting regarding the impact of savings, both those already achieved and those planned for Phase 2 and the Panel is looking forward to receiving further information about the implementation of the Blueprint model across the Alliance that will provide more detail on the planned savings.
- 2.6 Overall, the Panel recognises the complexities of the formation of the policing budget and has requested that an informal briefing be provided to members on an annual basis to understand how the budget is formed.

### **3.0 Budget Priorities**

- 3.1 The Panel notes the allocation of £2.5 million from reserves to address rural, business and cyber crime and accepts that the Commissioner will regularly monitor progress in these areas through his discussions with the Chief Constable. The Panel would like to be kept regularly informed on progress achieved in these three areas.

### **4.0 Funding to Community Safety Partnerships**

- 4.1 The Panel raised a concern at the meeting in respect of the allocation of funding to Community Safety Partnerships and the rationale for its distribution. The Panel accepts this that this an area which is being reviewed by the Commissioner and looks forward to receiving a report in the near future regarding the outcome of the review and any subsequent changes to funding allocation.

### **5.0 Capital Programme**

- 5.1 At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the Police and Crime Panel's Budget Working Group requested further information on Capital Programme management and monitoring procedures, including clarification on the Police and Crime Commissioner's judgment of the Capital Programme and how he challenged and monitored the Programme. The Panel supports this request.

### **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Panel notes the budget proposals and looks forward to more detailed information at future meetings in order that the Panel can monitor progress of both the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17 and the Budget in subsequent years. The Panel also looks forward to an informal briefing on the formation of the policing budget in November 2014.