

Minutes of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel held on 20 June 2014

Present:

Members of the Panel

Councillors:

Michael Coker	Warwick District Council
Nicola Davies	Warwickshire County 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
June Tandy	Warwickshire County Council
Robert Vaudry	Stratford-upon-Avon District 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
Eric Wood	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Neil Hewison	Chief Executive
Dave Clarke	Treasurer
Robert Phillips	Deputy Treasurer

Warwickshire County Council Officers

Phil Evans	Head of Localities and Community Safety
Sarah Duxbury	Head of Law and Governance
Janet Purcell	Democratic Services Manager
Virginia Rennie	Finance Adviser

Invitees for item 5:

Special Inspector Dave Watts and Special Constable Chris Webster.

1. Appointment of Chair

Councillor Helen Walton proposed that Councillor Dennis Harvey be appointed Chair of the Panel. Councillor Peter Fowler seconded the proposal.

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There were no other nominations.

Resolved

That Councillor Dennis Harvey be appointed Chair of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel for 2014/15.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor Peter Fowler proposed that Robin Verso be appointed Vice-Chair and was seconded by Bob Malloy. There were no other nominations.

Resolved

That Robin Verso be appointed Vice-Chair of the Warwickshire police and Crime Panel for 2014/15.

3. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Derek Poole (Rugby Borough Council) and Councillor Gillian Roache (Stratford upon Avon District Council). Councillor Helen Walton and Councillor Robert Vaudry had been appointed as substitutes for this meeting.

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

None.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014 were approved as a correct record.

4. Public Question Time

There were no questions.

The Chair referred to the Panel's previous decision to invite Neighbourhood Watch representatives to Panel meetings and it was agreed that every effort be made to encourage attendance for future meetings.

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5. Special Constables

The Chair welcomed Special Inspector Dave Watts and Special Constable Chris Webster who had been invited to the Panel to enable members to have a better understanding of their role and operation.

Special Inspector Dave Watts had been with the special constabulary for 9 years and Chris Webster for 18 months. Both are aligned to the Stratford Safer Neighbourhood Team but could be deployed anywhere in the County but their time is generally spent in Stratford Town and surrounding areas, including other parts of the South of the County, such as Leamington. It was noted that the organisation of special constables is based on a North and South split (which matches the radio control areas) but they could be deployed anywhere in the County if necessary.

Special officers have the same powers as the regular full time officers and cover a range of incidents including RTCs, burglaries and anti-social behaviour. Chris Webster gave examples of incidents he had attended that week including one involving a dangerous dog, a domestic dispute and a road traffic accident. A main focus of their role is on community safety and community assurance (for example through foot patrols in Stratford Town).

The average time commitment is 24 hours per month but this could vary from person to person with some doing less, some more. The minimum requirement is 16 hours.

The following points were noted in response to questions from the Panel:

- The special officers have contact with partners in an informal way (e.g. with street pastors they meet when on their beats) but also have regular conversations with CCTV and police camera operators.
- Line management is through the SNTs with whom there is an excellent working relationship. Specials are aware of the tasks to be covered through the task list on the central system and most will know what is expected of them for their shift. There is always a regular sergeant available who can be contacted if necessary.
- The types of incidents being attended by special officers is similar in both the north and south of the county, aside from one or two specialised areas of work.
- The working pattern for specials is largely Friday night, Saturdays and Sundays as this is the time that they can offer outside of most of their normal working hours. This can mean they are not working beyond 12 on a Friday or Saturday night as this would make for unreasonably long shifts.
- The approach to training specials has changed over the years and most recently. The current approach is for intensive period of training – which will include safety training, legal training, how to take statements etc. Once initial training is finished the officer will be assigned to a regular officer who will tutor and assess the officer and sign them off as

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independent. This means the time taken for an officer to become independent will vary.

- There is continual on-going training of around 5-6 mandatory courses a year, for example in response to changes in legislation.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, thanked the officers for their helpful presentation and for the time and commitment that gave in serving the community.

6. Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure

The Panel considered an addition to the Panel's Rules of Procedure which proposed a procedure for Public Question Time, in accordance with the Panel's decision in March to allow public to put questions to the Panel (and to the PCC, subject to his agreement).

During discussion the Panel was also advised that there was an error in the Terms of Reference at (j) which should refer to the Chief Constable being 'requested' rather than 'required' to attend meetings to answer questions. The Panel agreed that this correction be made. Officers also agreed to look at the wording on (e) and advise the Panel accordingly on whether it should, if legally possible, be amended.

Resolved

- (1) That the Powers listed in the Terms of Reference for the Panel be amended at (j) to read:

"(j) To require the Commissioner of any of his/her staff to attend on reasonable notice to answer questions necessary to the functions of the Panel and/or respond in writing to any report or recommendations made. Where the Commissioner is required to attend, the Chief Constable (on reasonable notice) can be requested to attend at the same time to answer questions."

- (2) That the Rules of Procedure include the addition of the Public Question Time scheme as set out at section 15 of Appendix A to the report.

7. Appointment of Sub-Panels

The Panel was invited to agree the establishment of a Planning and Performance Task and Finish Group, with terms of reference to be drafted by members appointed to that Group taking account of the Accountability Framework. The Panel was also invited to agree the scoping document for the Victim Services Task and Finish Group and to agree the membership of the Group and first meeting date.

It was noted that the timescale for the PCC to confirm commissioning intentions in relation to Victims' Services by April 2015 which required a lot of

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work up to meet this tight timescale. The support work to be undertaken by the Victim Services' Task and Finish Group also needed to be underway quickly. It was noted that there would be support from WCC officers for this area of work.

Resolved

- (1) That the membership of the Planning and Performance Working Group be noted (Cllrs June Tandy and Peter Fowler; Bob Malloy and Robin Verso) and the terms of reference drafted by the Working Group at its first meeting (to be arranged for July).
- (2) That the scoping document for the Victims' Services Task and Finish Group be approved as set out in Appendix B.
- (3) That Councillors June Tandy and Peter Morson, and Bob Malloy be appointed to the Task and Finish Group and a date for the first meeting agreed as soon as possible.

8. Fourth Report on the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Ron Ball presented his fourth report on the key activities he had undertaken since February 2014 and highlighted the following areas:

- There is a continuing trend of crime reduction.
- Ron Ball is a member of the national working group chaired by the Home Secretary to drive improvements in the service police provide to victims of domestic abuse.
- A review of Operation Davenport/Operation X is underway and the findings will be reported to the Panel. A review is also underway to ensure complaints from the public are being dealt with promptly and effectively.
- The public scrutiny meetings are attracting public attendance and on line viewing. Future meetings will ensure it is clear which part of the meeting is for public participation and which is for observation only so as to properly manage public expectation and input.

Ron Ball invited any comments and questions on any aspect of the report and responded as follows to questions:

- Ron Ball was asked what areas would be covered by the Independent Assessment of the Strategic Alliance and whether this may include future structural change. Ron Ball replied that in his view the Alliance was providing enormous savings without any sacrifice to democratic accountability and this is how he would wish it to stay. The Alliance is being hailed as a great success nationally and others are interested in the application of the model. The Police Foundation review will cover options for the Alliance's future development and the findings will be circulated to the Panel.

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- Ron Ball gave his assurance that he was monitoring the changes within the Criminal Justice System and in particular changes in Probation services which he appreciated carried both risks and opportunities.
- The record of business sector crime in Warwickshire appeared low at only 42 per annum. It was agreed that this may not reflect the full picture and certainly did not capture the increasing level of cyber-crime as this was not currently recorded.
- The increase in cycle collisions may indicate a need for increased education of road users. Ron Ball advised that he had rejected a bid for grant from a motorcycle safety group as it did not meet the funding criteria but added that he was looking at how training for returning motorcyclists could be supported. Members requested that more detail be provided on the nature of the collisions e.g. was it happening on particular roads or in particular environments.

9. Community Engagement and Delivery Plan

Ron Ball reported on progress with developing the Community Engagement and Delivery Plan including the mapping of all crime and disorder meetings across the partnerships and activities with the Community Safety Ambassadors to ensure engagement with partners and increased visibility. This would include a press release to inform residents about the role of the CSA and their impact to date.

It was noted that, subject to vetting, an appointment had been made of a CSA for Camp Hill and Galley Common and recruitment was underway for two forum areas in North Warwickshire following a resignation. The Panel requested a list of the CSAs so that they could be sure they had the name of their local CSA. It was noted that there would also be press releases to inform residents of the CSA's role and impact to date.

Neil Hewison reported that the Plan is still to be completed but now that the Policy Research Officer is in place it is envisaged that it will be completed by September.

10. Community Safety Grants Scheme

Ron Ball presented a report listing the community grants he had awarded for 2014-15 and explaining the evaluation process that had been applied to bids for funding. The process had been intensive and had required a lot of work from staff in his office but it was envisaged that it would be less intensive in future years.

Ron Ball advised that he had taken views from the Community Safety Partnerships and did not fund projects that were not aligned with or supported by the CSPs. He had also rejected many bids. This included a number of Hate Crime applications, preferring to support the research being undertaken

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by Birmingham University which would inform a strategy and bidding organisations will then be invited to work with partners to develop evidence based projects.

It was noted that there appeared to be a shortfall in support for tackling cyber-crime. Ron Ball advised that there is an Alliance and separate Warwickshire and West Mercia groups focusing on this and that it is being taken very seriously. Much of the work will be on prevention and education. This includes a cyber-bullying task and finish group and the funding of a toolkit for each CSP to assist them in undertaking an analysis of cyber-crime as at present it was unreported.

Eric Wood reported that the second cyber-crime conference would be held at the University of Worcester on September 8th and that any members of the Panel would be welcome. It was also agreed that a report on progress with the cyber-crime work come back to the Panel.

11. Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2013/14

Members were invited to report any feedback they had received from their authorities with regard to the Panel's first Annual Report. It was noted that the covering page should be amended to show the correct Warwickshire Police badge.

Resolved

That the Panel's first Annual Report be received.

The Chair left the meeting at this point and Robin Verso, the Vice-Chair took the chair.

12. Implementation of the Blueprint Model

Ron Ball presented a report outlining progress in a number of areas across the Alliance. He was pleased to report that the Alliance was recognised nationally as ambitious and ground breaking and that in particular, the changes were being made without any dip in performance against targets, for which he commended the work of the two Chief Constables and their teams.

Ron Ball referred to the next stage of strengthening the Alliance as outlined in the report. The following points were made in response to questions raised by the Panel:

- With regard to pressure for collaboration/merger, Ron Ball stated that he was not under pressure from the Home Office. He reiterated his support for developing the Alliance and his opposition to merger or collaboration as this would result in one Chief Constable and leadership team for too big an area, leading to a disconnection with local people. It was also noted that in areas where there had been

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large scale merger (e.g. Scotland) financial benefits had not been realised but had in fact shown that too large a force can lead to diseconomies.

- The savings plan is being monitored by the PCC's Audit Committee using a savings tracker. It was agreed that this be shared with the Panel's Budget Working Group.
- Ron Ball explained that the challenges faced by the Alliance were the financial pressure, with there being no easy wins left. However he was convinced that the Alliance was the only way to meet the challenge and that the challenge itself had a positive side in motivating people to work together. He added that there had been challenges in bringing together two organisations who are both naturally proud of their Force but the Alliance allowed the retention of identity with the benefit of joint working.
- The governance arrangements described in section 10 of the report appeared quite complex. Eric Wood explained that the arrangements will ensure that all proposals are tested and that this approach supports the embedded governance culture that is now in place in the Alliance.

It was also agreed that the report be recirculated with the four work streams listed as these appear to be missing from the text on page 5 along with a chart of the governance arrangements.

13. Finance Update – Quarter 4 2013/14

The Panel considered the Quarter 4 finance report which included the outturn for 2013/14 and update on the alliance programme.

The Panel noted that the level of underspending (and of reserves) was higher than expected and yet this does not appear to have impacted negatively on performance. Robin Verso questioned whether the PCC would have chosen to increase the budget precept if he had been aware that this was likely to be the position.

Dave Clarke explained that the difference since that reported in February was around £100k. If the precept had not been increased then it would have been possible to fund this for a period of time at £800k per annum but this would impact in the long term on the base budget. Also the increase in precept was around £3.60 per year per household.

Robin Verso questioned why the spend against the capital programme had been very low and whether there was a deliberate strategy of over-programming.

Dave Clarke replied that there were planning issues and that there has been a pattern of putting projects in the programme too early. In terms of

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performance the focus has been on making staffing changes that will have impacted on their work and delivery of the capital programme.

Robin Verso observed that making revenue contributions to the capital programme meant that today's taxpayers were paying for future benefits which could be considered inequitable. Dave Clarke explained that it had been agreed that any underspending would be used to reduce borrowing, and in turn was part of delivering the long term saving requirements – which would be of benefit to future taxpayers.

It was agreed that the Medium Term Financial Plan and position on reserves be put to the next meeting of the Budget Working Group to look at in more detail. Dave Clarke advised that he would include the risk assessment he undertook each year.

It was agreed that the Panel look at this again at its meeting in July.

14. Work Programme 2014/15

The Panel considered a number of issues in relation to its work programme and ways of operation and agreed as set out below. During discussion Ron Ball invited any member who wished to visit his office and meet his staff to arrange a visit by contacting his office.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme for 2014/15 be agreed as appended to the report.
- (2) That future meetings are webcast, subject to monitor of the effectiveness of their operation.
- (3) That the Panel notes the update on recommendations and actions previously requested by the Panel.
- (4) That the quarterly monitoring of the budget be delegated to the Budget Working Group.
- (5) That Councillor Peter Fowler and Robin Verso attend the PCP conference on 10 July (with Councillor Peter Morson as reserve).

15. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items on this occasion.

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16. Date of Next Meeting

The Panel noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for 18 July 2014 at 10.00 am at Rugby Town Hall.

17. Report containing Exempt Information

Resolved

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 exempt information as defined in paragraph 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

18. Complaints

The Panel were advised that there had been one complaint against the PCC. The complaint was not recorded for the reasons set out in the exempt report and following consultation by the Chief Executive with the Chair of the PCP.

Resolved

That the Panel notes the reasons for the decision to not record the complaint as set out in the exempt report.

The meeting rose at 12:10 pm

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Chairman