

**Minutes of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel
held on 21st November 2014**

Webcast

A webcast of this meeting is also available at:

<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/police-and-crime-panel>

Present:

Members of the Panel

Councillors:

Nicola Davies	Warwickshire County Council
Peter Fowler	Warwickshire County Council
Susan Gallagher	Warwick District Council (substitute for Cllr Coker)
Phillip Morris-Jones	Warwickshire County Council
Derek Poole	Rugby Borough Council
Robert Vaudry	Stratford-upon-Avon District Council (substitute for Cllr Roache)

Co-opted Independent members

Bob Malloy
Robin Verso (Vice-Chair)

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Ron Ball	Police and Crime Commissioner
David Clarke	Treasurer
Neil Hewison	Chief Executive
Rebecca Parsons	Performance and Scrutiny Officer
Robert Phillips	Deputy Treasurer
Eric Wood	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

Warwickshire and West Mercia Strategic Alliance

Detective Superintendent Steve Cullen

Warwickshire County Council Officers

Georgina Atkinson	Democratic Services Team Leader
John Betts	Head of Finance
Phil Evans	Head of Localities and Community Safety
Sarah Duxbury	Head of Law and Governance
Sheila Meakin	Interim Service Manager, Safeguarding

Members of the public

Councillor Chris Cade, Neighbourhood Watch Association
Councillor Peter Oakley, Stratford-upon-Avon District Council
Mr Trevor Honeychurch, Community Safety Ambassador

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1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Michael Coker (who was substituted by Councillor Susan Gallagher), Councillor Dennis Harvey, Councillor Peter Morson, Councillor Gillian Roache (who was substituted by Councillor Robert Vaudry) and Councillor June Tandy.

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

Bob Malloy and Robin Verso declared a pecuniary interest in respect of Item 8, 'Reimbursement for Independent Members'.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2014

The Police and Crime Panel agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th September 2014 be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

With regard to Item 8, 'Operation Devonport', the Chair requested that the assessment report, which would include a full analysis of value for money, be presented to the Police and Crime Panel at the earliest opportunity.

2. Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public on this occasion.

3. Child Sexual Exploitation

The Police and Crime Commissioner provided a verbal update on recent activity to address Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Warwickshire. The Commissioner's three principal aims were to: a) remove any barriers to children reporting CSE; b) ensure children who reported CSE were believed in the first instance; and c) effectively collate information from a wide range of sources in order to identify CSE cases. As part of this, the Commissioner supported the development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in partnership with Warwickshire County Council. The MASH would co-ordinate all relevant agencies for information sharing purposes and the identification of risks and incidents. He explained that a prudent approach was being taken in the establishment of the MASH, to ensure the effective engagement of all key partners and the agreement of information-sharing protocols. Members of the Panel expressed concern regarding the lack of clear timescales for the launch of the MASH. The Commissioner explained that, as the statutory body, the County Council was responsible for the MASH and was yet to confirm timescales. He suggested that County Councillors seek clarification from relevant County Council officers.

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The Panel was informed that CSE fell within the remit of the Protecting Vulnerable People unit of the Strategic Alliance. Within this unit, three teams of six specialist policing staff would be designated to CSE. At present, 99 children in Warwickshire had been identified as either a victim of, or at risk of, CSE. A further 74 children not yet known to the police had been identified as at risk.

Both the Commissioner and the Panel agreed that all schools had an important role in raising awareness about CSE and identifying vulnerable young people. It was reported that guidance documents had been provided to schools regarding CSE indicators and referral methods. The Commissioner stressed that the public also had a role in recognising the signs of CSE and sharing information with the police.

The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner explained that a child did not become an adult until their 18th birthday; therefore there needed to be greater awareness of activity involving young people, such as 'sexting' (the act of sending sexually explicit message, primarily via mobile phones) as criminal offences.

A question was raised regarding how frontline Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) would be trained to enable them to identify vulnerable children or CSE activity while on patrol. Detective Superintendent Steve Cullen advised that it was essential that all Police Officers and PCSOs had the ability to identify and assess CSE risk in all scenarios and incidents involving young people. A range of educational resources had been provided to frontline staff.

The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner concluded by drawing attention to the vulnerability of people at all years of age. He considered that the concept of the MASH in Warwickshire should be broadened to encompass others, such as vulnerable older people and children who were experiencing neglect.

The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel agreed to note the verbal update and scheduled a further update for the meeting on 3rd February 2015.

4. Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Detective Superintendent Steve Cullen provided the Panel with an update on Warwickshire Police's latest position in respect of domestic abuse. He reported that commencing 24th November 2014, there would be 16 days of action to raise awareness about domestic abuse and support for vulnerable victims. The force provided regular progress updates in response to the recommendations airing from the HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) review and high risk cases were now discussed on a daily basis to ensure that the needs of vulnerable victims were being met. Furthermore, there was recognition that domestic abuse often affected children and effective links with safeguarding teams had been formed.

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The Panel was informed that dealing with domestic abuse was fundamentally a partnership based activity, involving a number of statutory and voluntary bodies.

With regard to the number of domestic abuse cases, Detective Superintendent Cullen explained that while it was significantly underreported, the number of victims reporting cases was increasing. He stressed the importance of frontline officers having the necessary skills and understanding when dealing with and supporting victims of this type of crime.

A question was raised regarding how frontline officers were trained to deal with victims of sexual violence in an appropriate and sensitive manner. Detective Superintendent Cullen advised that there was significant investment in frontline training to ensure that all shifts at peak demand times had a specialist officer available to support victims. He added that all cases of rape and high risk domestic abuse were then forwarded to a Detective for investigation. All Detectives were required to undergo extensive training and examinations and frequently analysed cases to identify learning points.

The Panel expressed concern at the conversion rate regarding the number of reported rapes resulting in a charge, which was currently ten per cent for Warwickshire Police, compared to a national average of 18 per cent. In response, Detective Superintendent Cullen advised that decisions to prosecute were made with the Crown Prosecution Service. In many cases, individuals accused of rape would claim that there had been consent for sexual activity; it was therefore imperative that the victim was believed at the outset and the case was investigated from that basis. Another challenge to prosecution was the delay between the incident and the time of reporting; some victims did not report to the police immediately which resulted in forensic evidence being lost. Detective Superintendent Cullen assured the Panel that there was an effective team of police and solicitors who would attempt to overcome these challenges.

The Commissioner informed the Panel that Warwickshire did have a high conviction rate for those cases that did go to court. He explained that it was a traumatic experience for victims to appear before a court and therefore it would be inappropriate to present cases which had little chance of a conviction. He considered that Warwickshire Police did deal with rape cases appropriately and highlighted that the evidential threshold made it challenging to achieve high conversion rates. He concluded by informing the Panel that, as a member of the National Oversight Group, domestic abuse was one of his key priorities. He paid tribute to the work of the police staff in improving responses to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel agreed to note the report and scheduled a further update for the meeting on 26th June 2014.

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5. Report of the Budget Working Group

The Panel considered the report and minutes of the Budget Working Group meeting that had taken place on 12th November 2014. Robin Verso referred to the minutes of the meeting and the key areas that had been discussed with regard to the Quarter 2 (2014/15) Budget Monitoring Report. The Working Group had noted that significant underspending was continuing, that reserves were increasing rather than reducing as planned; and that there was major capital programme slippage. The Working Group had been advised that the Strategic Alliance would continue to underspend in anticipation of future budget reductions through the early achievement of savings; for example, by not filling vacant posts. This approach was apparent in police forces and local government authorities when budgets were on a downward trajectory.

With regard to the projected underspend of £10.8 million across the Strategic Alliance, the Commissioner advised that the majority of that figure related to officer pay as a result of a higher turnover in police officers than anticipated. Both Police and Crime Commissioners had requested that this be addressed as a matter of urgency; however, the speed of recruitment had been disappointing. The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner advised that both Chief Constables had been held to account for the level of recruitment and a Star Chamber had been established by the Commissioners to monitor progress. The Chief Constables had been tasked with reducing the nine month recruitment timetable to four and a half months through streamlining and efficiency. The Alliance remained committed to recruiting 400 police staff by April 2015.

In response to a question raised regarding the precept, the Commissioner advised that further grant cuts of an estimated £30 million for the Strategic Alliance were anticipated; in light of this, there would need to be careful consideration regarding precept increases from 2015/16 onwards. He confirmed that a decision had not yet been made and that it was important to have a precept aligned with West Mercia, if possible. David Clarke, Treasurer, added that it had been identified nationally that approximately 37 of the 43 English and Welsh police forces had increased their level of reserves as a result of consistent underspending and were also planning for a two per cent precept increase.

The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel agreed to:

- 1) Note the report of the Budget Working Group meeting;
- 2) Request that a report on the Leek Wootton development, estates and the use of major buildings be presented at its meeting on 24th April 2015; and
- 3) Request that the Budget Working Group receive a report on the use of the Invest to Save budget at its meeting scheduled for 13th January 2015.

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6. Report of the Planning and Performance Working Group

The Panel considered the report and minutes of the Planning and Performance Working Group meeting that had taken place on 29th October 2014. Bob Malloy explained that the Commissioner's Delivery Plan would be used by the Working Group to identify key topics which could be presented as reports to future meetings of the Panel. Members were asked to consider priority issues that would need to be considered by the Working Group at its next meeting on 1st December 2014.

The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel agreed to note the report of the Planning and Performance Working Group.

7. Report of the Victims' Services Task and Finish Group

The Panel considered the report of the Victims' Services Task and Finish Group. Bob Malloy advised that by 1st April 2015, the Police and Crime Commissioner will be required to state his commissioning intentions with regard to the future provision of support services to victims of crime. The Task and Finish Group had been appointed by the Panel to undertake a review of existing service provision for victims of crime in order to contribute to the commissioning activity.

It was reported that the Task and Finish Group had gathered and received evidence from a wide range of sources, including local representatives of support services and victims of crime; this had resulted in the identification of 19 evidence-based recommendations to address a number of thematic issues regarding the full range of victim support services in Warwickshire.

The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel thanked the Task and Finish Group for the review and agreed to submit the report and recommendations to the Police and Crime Commissioner for consideration.

8. Reimbursement to Independent Members

As Bob Malloy and Robin Verso had declared a pecuniary interest in this item, they both left the room and did not participate in the debate or the vote. Councillor Derek Poole was appointed as the Chair for this item only.

The Panel was asked to consider whether the two co-opted members should be reimbursed for their time and commitment to the Police and Crime Panel, subject to officers identifying an appropriate way of doing so. Research had indicated that the average rate of reimbursement was £1,000 per annum. The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel agreed that the two co-opted members be reimbursed at the rate of £1,000 per annum, subject to officers finding an appropriate way of doing so.

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9. Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to the report which provided an outline of recent activity that had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Panel.

With regard to the HMIC Crime Data Integrity report which had been published recently, the Commissioner explained that although it indicated that Warwickshire Police had recorded only 82 per cent of crimes in 2012/13, it did not necessarily mean that crime was 18 per cent higher than reported. The findings had demonstrated that Warwickshire Police was performing on an average basis when compared nationally and significant work would be undertaken to improve this position over the next three months. Neil Hewison reported that a detailed plan to address the key issues and recommendations in the HMIC report had been drafted which would be delivered by a number of working groups. He assured the Panel that the HMIC report had not indicated malpractice and had highlighted that the issues identified were predominately with the process. It was considered that the transfer to the digital recording system would also help to improve crime recording. Neil Hewison and the Commissioner acknowledged the potential affect that the report may have on public confidence in the police and concurred that accurate crime recording was required in order to be confident about the reduction in crime rates.

The Commissioner explained that HMIC reports could be unhelpful to the public's perception and confidence in the police. He considered that the statistics published by the British Crime Survey provided a more accurate representation. The Panel was advised that user satisfaction with Warwickshire Police was currently 82.7 per cent; in response, the Commissioner was asked to clarify what assessment was undertaken to understand why 17.3 per cent of users were dissatisfied.

A discussion took place with regard to the recruitment of a Chief Constable for Warwickshire Police. The Commissioner explained that he had taken legal advice that members of the Panel should not be involved in the recruitment process given the role of the Panel in the Confirmation Hearing. The candidates would be assessed by three Selection Panels, each with a specific focus: partnership working; police and political.

A question was asked regarding the Community Remedy, which had been introduced as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. In response, Neil Hewison advised that individual remedies would be considered by the Out-of-Court Disposals Panel and that action would be taken by the police for those offenders who failed to comply with the remedy. The Commissioner added that all remedies needed to be meaningful and have the full acceptance of the victim.

The Panel considered the latest performance figures for Warwickshire Police. The Commissioner drew attention to the number of 'violence without injury' incidents which had increased by 63 per cent when compared against the same seven year period from 2013/14. The Chief Constable had been tasked

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with identifying potential causes for the increase, particularly in the Rugby area which had experienced the highest increase. One factor may be the recent improvements to crime recording following the HMIC Crime Data Integrity review.

A request was made by the Panel for greater detail within the Warwickshire Police performance figures; for example, detail for each district or borough and the sub-categories for certain types of crime, such as 'burglary other'. The Commissioner agreed to consider the cost effectiveness of providing this additional detail.

The Chair thanked the Police and Crime Commissioner for the update report.

The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel agreed to note the update report and request the following:

- 1) The membership of the three Selection Panels for the recruitment of the Chief Constable; and
- 2) A copy of Warwickshire Police performance figures for circulation with the agenda for each meeting.

10. Cyber, Rural and Business Crime

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to the report which provided an update on the work of the Strategic Alliance to tackle Cyber, Rural and Business Crime. A member of the Panel commented that recent activity had been significantly focused on tackling cyber crime, rather than business crime. In response, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner explained that crimes committed against businesses were often cyber-based; therefore, specific support, such as the Cyber Essentials scheme, was being offered to business. Furthermore, a seminar had been delivered for the Federation of Small Businesses.

The Panel was advised that the British Crime Survey had developed a series of questions regarding cyber theft and fraud to ascertain an accurate representation of cyber crime frequency and volume at a national level. Locally, Warwickshire County Council's Citizens Panel would also receive a cyber-crime survey which would be used in conjunction with the British Crime Survey results to achieve an accurate representation of cyber crime in Warwickshire and subsequently, resources would be deployed appropriately.

The Police and Crime Panel agreed to note the report.

11. Work Programme 2014/15

The Police and Crime Panel considered the Work Programme 2014/15 and updated Recommendations and Actions document.

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Georgina Atkinson, Democratic Services Team Leader, confirmed that the Panel's Confirmation Hearing to consider the appointment of the Chief Constable for Warwickshire Constabulary had been scheduled for 19th December 2014. A Briefing Note, which outlined the Panel's role and statutory responsibilities, would be circulated in due course.

The Chair referred to two conferences he had attended recently in respect of Police and Crime Panels. At those events it had been apparent that a number of members of other Panels did not feel that they had sufficient powers to hold Police and Crime Commissioners to account; however, he considered that the openness of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner, and his willingness to share information, had achieved a positive working relationship with the Warwickshire Panel and had enabled effective scrutiny to be undertaken.

The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel:

- 1) Agreed the updated Work Programme for 2014/15;
- 2) Noted the update on recommendations and actions previously requested by the Panel; and
- 3) Agreed to submit suggestions regarding future priorities/topics for the Work Programme to the Democratic Services Team Leader by 1st December 2014, in order to be considered at the next meeting of the Planning and Performance Working Group.

12. Urgent Items

The Chair referred to the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) inquiry of police accountability which included a number of specific questions regarding the role of Police and Crime Panels. The Democratic Services Team Leader would combine the responses that had been submitted by individual Panel members into a single document which would subsequently be circulated to the Panel prior to submission to the Committee on 28th November 2014.

Councillor Morris-Jones highlighted the CSPL's comment that: *"PCCs are elected for a four year term of office with a limit of two terms. They can be disqualified from holding office on certain grounds, such as being the subject of debt or bankruptcy conditions or on conviction of a criminal offence. They can only be suspended by their Police and Crime Panel in circumstances where the PCC has been charged with a criminal offence which carries a maximum term of imprisonment exceeding two years"*. He considered that the reasons for dismissal or suspension appeared to lack logic, commenting that debt could easily be suffered by an honest individual yet it would incur a serious penalty; by contrast, a wilful criminal act incurring a prison sentence of less than two years seemed to be no less serious. He considered that the

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existing arrangements for either dismissing or suspending a Commissioner were neither logical nor fair.

The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel and the Police and Crime Commissioner agreed to share their final response to the Committee inquiry.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Police and Crime Panel noted that an extraordinary meeting had been scheduled for 19th December 2014, commencing 2.00 p.m. at Shire Hall, Warwick, to undertake the Confirmation Hearing for the Chief Constable of Warwickshire Constabulary.

The next ordinary meeting had been scheduled for 3rd February 2015, commencing 10.00 a.m. at Shire Hall, Warwick.

14. Report Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

The Police and Crime Panel noted that as there had not been any complaints for its attention since the last meeting, there was nothing to discuss for this item and therefore there was no need to exclude the press and public.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.

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Chairman