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# WARWICKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

## Annual Report 2015-16

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## Chair's Foreword



**Robin Verso**

*Chair: Warwickshire Police and Crime panel 2016/17*

*Vice-Chair: Warwickshire Police and Crime panel 2015/16*

The Police and Crime Panel carries out the very important, but largely unseen, job of holding the elected Police and Crime Commissioner to account. Of course ultimately, it is for the public to determine, through the ballot box, who they want as commissioner or whether they are satisfied with a commissioner who stands for re-election.

The Panel's job is made easier if the Commissioner willingly enables it to examine all aspects of performance, and in this regard, I want to pay tribute to the former Commissioner Ron Ball and his Deputy Eric Wood. They have been exemplary in reporting to the panel, exposing the important issues, answering the Panel's questions and listening to their concerns, and arguing the case for policies and actions. The Commissioner's staff have provided complementary support to enable the Panel to work efficiently and productively, in particular the Chief Executive Neil Hewison, the OPCC policy officers and finance officers.

I want to thank the officers of the County Council who have ably supported the Panel, in particular Sarah Duxbury, Jane Pollard, Janet Purcell, Sally Baxter, Virginia Rennie and John Betts.

The ten Councillors who serve on the Panel (without any additional payment) and the two independent members, are the scrutineers of the work of the Commissioner. They have contributed effectively over the past year, particularly on working groups, using their combined skills and experience to question and probe until the Panel has obtained satisfactory answers. I want to thank them and especially Cllr Dennis Harvey, Chair of the Panel from its inception in 2012 up to May 2016, who has managed many meetings fairly, sensitively and without political bias.

The Panel continued to develop the way it works in 2015/16 and will be undertaking further training in 2016/17, seeking to ensure that it operates efficiently and effectively in working with the new Commissioner Philip Seccombe, supporting him in his important job, holding him to account and scrutinising his plans and policies. He holds the Police to account and seeks to reduce crime. We try to ensure he does it well.

This report covers how the Panel carried out its role with the former Commissioner in 2015/16.

## Role of the Police and Crime Panel

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 brought in new arrangements for national policing, strategic police decision-making and policing accountability. Principal among these changes was the introduction of police and crime commissioners, who are directly elected by the public, and responsible for the totality of policing in their area.



At the same time, local Police and Crime Panels were established to:

- Hold the local Police and Crime Commissioner to account by acting as a 'critical friend'.
- Scrutinise, challenge and support the Commissioner, maintaining a 'check and balance' on strategic decisions.
- Review the annual Police Precept.
- Contribute to the development of the Commissioners Police and Crime Plan.

The Panel is not responsible for holding the Police to account and is not a replacement for the Police Authority. The Panel scrutinises the policies and actions of the Commissioner, who seeks to reduce crime and ensure good police performance.

For example, if the Panel identified an issue with violent crime, it would scrutinise what action the Commissioner was taking to address the issue at a strategic level, rather than ask police officers what action they were taking at an operational level.



Further details regarding the statutory powers and responsibilities of the Panel can be accessed at:

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/policeandcrimepanel](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/policeandcrimepanel)

More information about the Police and Crime Commissioner can be found through his website at

[www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk)

In November 2012, Warwickshire County Council was designated as the host authority for the Panel. This means that the County Council is responsible for training and supporting the Panel and its meetings, as well as providing legal, financial and constitutional advice. In 2015/16, all host authorities received a Home Office grant for the provision of this support of £53,000.

## Key Activities and Achievements

The Police and Crime Panel considered total of twenty-six reports from its respective sub-groups and from the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2015/16. Meeting formally in public with the Commissioner six times during the year, the Panel regularly exercised its role in holding the Commissioner to account for his decisions.

### Key Statistic 2015/16

The Police and Crime Panel met formally

**6** times 

The areas outlined in the following section are not exhaustive and are intended to provide a snapshot of the Panel's key achievements. The full list of scrutiny areas considered during the year can be found on the County Council's website [here](#).

### PEEL Inspections

In 2015 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted a review into Warwickshire police's effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. These are known as PEEL inspections. This inspection assessed how the force maximises its outcomes from the available resource, asking 'how successful is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?' The inspectorate concluded that the force's effectiveness and legitimacy in keeping people safe and reducing crime required improvement.

Following a Working Group's consideration of the PEEL report, they referred the matter to the Police and Crime Panel, highlighting that the external auditors report a good value for money judgement, yet the PEEL report suggests that value for money "could not be evidenced." The working group requested that the Commissioner present them with an action plan for addressing the issues highlighted within the Inspectorate's report.

The Panel expressed concern with regard to the number of children that go missing, and their vulnerability to sexual exploitation, as raised in the PEEL report. The Commissioner explained that he was prepared to fund a post to support return to home interviews. The Panel questioned him on a number of issues including stop and search, neighbourhood profiles and leadership. The Commissioner has since published his response to the PEEL inspection, and the Planning and Performance Working Group agreed to monitor the implementation of the actions arising.

### Key Statistic 2015/16

**26**



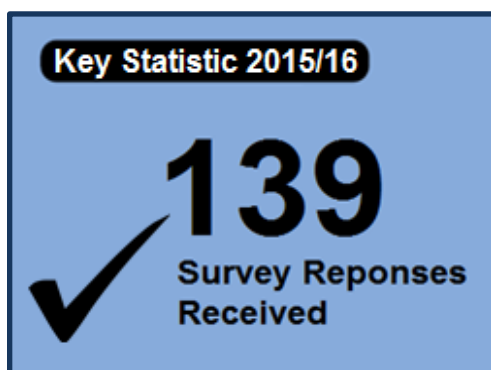
Reports received from the Commissioner and the Panel's working groups.



## Stakeholder Engagement Task and Finish Group

Guided by the Police and Crime Plan, and the outgoing Police and Crime Commissioner's commitment and duty to listen to stakeholders, the Panel agreed in April 2015 to undertake a short-life task and finish review in order to assess the effectiveness of this engagement, and make recommendations for improvement. The primary objective of the review was to evaluate the PCC's engagement arrangements and the PCC's contribution and support for stakeholders in order to identify areas of good practice and further development. To address the issue, the group looked back at the work that had been done. They considered:

- Whether there is a clear understanding about what contributions stakeholders can make in the delivery of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, and whether they have been able to positively influence the Police and Crime Plan?
- What has been the impact of the PCC's actions/decisions on stakeholders, and do they feel able to positively influence and contribute to the work of the PCC and his decisions?



A number of stakeholders were identified for a questionnaire that the working group devised. 139 responses were received and the results highlighted that people valued the Commissioner attending public meetings, and want his visibility to continue to grow. Throughout this review the group acknowledged the efforts made by the Commissioner to ensure effective engagement. Whilst the Panel has no decision making powers, the group did make several recommendations for improvement to the former Commissioner, including:

- That recognising the fundamental role parish, town, district and county councils play in the communities they serve, consideration should be given to how these bodies receive timely, accurate and relevant information.
- That as part of the preparation of the Police and Crime Plan, an event be held for stakeholders. This should cover progress against previous plans and targets, and a discussion about the emerging priorities of the PCC.
- That the PCC give consideration to the establishment of a standing "Citizens' Panel" to assist in the production of the strategy and to respond to consultation.
- That to complement the PCC, regular (quarterly) newsletters or briefings should be produced for stakeholders, outlining strategic issues and developments.

## Scrutiny of the Local Policing Precept 2015/16

One of the key roles of the Panel is to consider the Commissioner's proposed policing budget and precept. The Panel held a meeting in February 2016 to consider the Commissioner's proposed increase of 1.99% to the precept. This is the amount of funding that needs to be raised through council tax. The Commissioner expressed his view that if the precept were not increased by 1.99% in each year over the medium term, the subsequent cost to the police force would rise by £2.8M, which would need to be found elsewhere. In assessing the Commissioner's proposals, the Panel had two primary concerns:

- The significant level of underspending in previous financial years – the biggest single contributor to this was delays in recruiting police officers and staff.
- The high level of financial reserves, largely due to underspending on revenue and on the planned use of reserves.

The Panel has the power to veto precept proposals; however, following an extensive discussion, members voted to accept the increase. With the support of the Budget Working Group, the Panel will continue to monitor revenue and capital spending and the Commissioner's plans for the precept throughout 2016/17.



## Working Groups

During 2013/14, it became clear that the Police and Crime Panel wished to undertake proactive scrutiny work above and beyond its statutory obligations, in order to provide constructive challenge and support to the Commissioner in the delivery of his Police and Crime Plan. To assist with the additional work required, the Panel agreed to appoint two Sub-Panels (known as Working Groups).

### Budget Working Group

#### Role:

- Undertakes quarterly monitoring of the Commissioner's budget including the medium term financial plan, reserves and capital programme.
- Evaluates the Commissioner's proposed precept increase and makes recommendations, if considered appropriate, to the Panel at the annual precept meeting.

#### Key outcomes:

- In depth scrutiny and monitoring of quarterly budget expenditure.
- Provided critical challenge to the use of financial reserves and underspends.
- Investigated the reasons behind staff vacancies and recruitment issues across the Strategic Alliance.

### Planning and Performance Working Group

#### Role:

- Monitors and tracks the delivery of the Commissioner's priorities in his Police and Crime Plan.
- Analyses the latest performance reports from Warwickshire Police in order to identify any key issues to raise with the Commissioner at future Panel meetings.
- Reviews the Work Programme of the Police and Crime Panel and makes recommendations to the Panel regarding areas of business for future meetings and Task and Finish Group reviews.
- Ensures that the activities of the Police and Crime Panel are aligned to the statutory functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan.

#### Key outcomes:

- Considered the Commissioners delivery plan in detail.
- Consultation on, and scrutiny of, the Performance Framework for the Strategic Alliance.
- Engagement with the National Police and Crime Panel Conference.
- Engagement with senior police officers in examining police performance data.



## Other business considered

As part of their work, the Police and Crime Panel received regular updates at each of their meetings from the Commissioner on recent activity that he had undertaken. From these, the Panel often identify the need for further work and analysis. Other items considered in 2015/16 by the Panel include:

- confirmation of the appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner's preferred candidate for Treasurer until the May 2016 elections. The interim treasurer has since successfully undergone a further hearing to confirm her permanent appointment.
- Updates on the development of the Strategic Alliance with West Mercia.
- The growth of cyber-enabled crime and strategies being developed to reduce it.
- The health and wellbeing survey of staff within the Strategic Alliance.
- The 2020 'Vision' for the Strategic Alliance.
- non-criminal complaints made in relation to the conduct of the Commissioner.



## Looking Forward

When writing this report last year, it was clear that there were some uncertainties about the policy direction of policing accountability, owing to the then impending general election. Police and Crime Commissioners, who replaced the previous model of police authorities, have powers to hire and fire chief constables and set police strategy and budgets.

They were first elected in November 2012 on a historically low turnout, however, by combining the elections with local authority elections, turnout has improved. 26% of Warwickshire's electorate turned out to vote in 2016, and the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Phillip Seccombe, has now taken up office. Below, Philip (right) can be seen with the outgoing Commissioner, Ron Ball (left).



In April 2016, the then Home Secretary Theresa May said there was scope for PCCs to go further. A new Police and Crime Bill is making its way through the Houses of Parliament (July 2016) which seeks to change numerous police policies, including provisions relating to:

- the handling of police complaints and matters relating to police conduct;
- police inspections
- combating the sexual exploitation of children

However, one of the most significant provisions in this bill, if passed, relates to the greater engagement of the Police and Crime Commissioner in coordinating fire and rescue services.

Many Fire and Rescue Authorities are standalone organisations and are not part of any County Council. The government considers there to be a democratic deficit in the way these authorities are run and held accountable. Therefore, it is their intention to give commissioners the ability to take on responsibility for fire and rescue services where a local case is made. Throughout 2016/17, the Panel will continue to monitor this matter.

The Panel recognises that the new Commissioner will need to make difficult decisions on priorities in seeking to ensure in particular that Warwickshire's most vulnerable residents are protected. The Panel looks forward to reviewing the Commissioner's new Police and Crime Plan under the guidance of a new Chair and working with him to get the best outcomes for the people, communities and businesses of Warwickshire

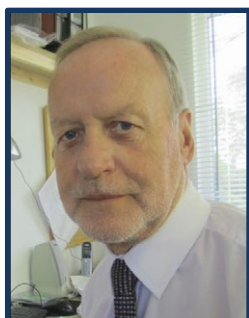
## Membership 2015/16

Warwickshire's Police and Crime Panel consists of five Warwickshire County Councillors and one Councillor from each of the five District/Borough areas of Warwickshire (North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby, Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick). There are also two co-opted independent (i.e. non-councillor) members.

The membership for 2015/16 was, as follows:



**Chair - Councillor**  
Dennis Harvey,  
Nuneaton & Bedworth  
Borough Council



**Vice – Chair** Mr  
Robin Verso  
Independent  
Member



Councillor, David  
Reilly, North  
Warwickshire  
Borough Council



Councillor Nicola  
Davis, Warwickshire  
County Council



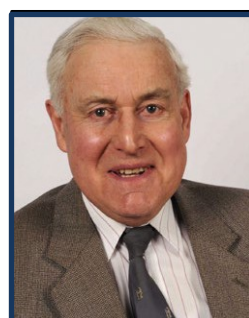
Councillor Mike  
Brain, Warwickshire  
County Council



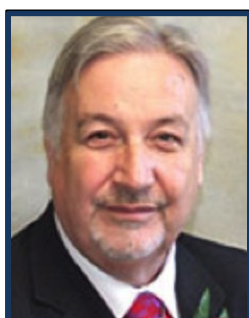
Councillor  
Stephen Grey,  
Stratford-on-Avon  
District Council.



Mr Bob Malloy,  
Independent  
Member



Councillor Phillip Morris-  
Jones, Warwickshire  
County Council



Councillor Peter  
Morson, Warwickshire  
County Council



Councillor Derek  
Poole, Rugby Borough  
Council



Councillor Moria-Ann  
Granger, Warwick  
District Council



Councillor June Tandy,  
Warwickshire County  
Council



## Getting Involved

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You can keep up to date with the work of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel by visiting our website [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/policeandcrimepanel](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/policeandcrimepanel)

Listening to the views of local residents is an important part of the work of Panel. All meetings are open to the public and anyone who lives or works in Warwickshire is welcome to submit a question to either the Panel or the Police and Crime Commissioner.

If you wish to submit a question, please submit it in writing at least three working days in advance of the meeting using the contact details below:

### Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

Warwickshire County Council  
PO Box 9, Shire Hall  
Warwick, CV34 4RL  
Tel: (01926) 413747

Email: [democraticservices@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Web: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/policeandcrimepanel](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/policeandcrimepanel)

Blog: [www.warksdemocracy.wordpress.com](http://www.warksdemocracy.wordpress.com)

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