

**Minutes of the meeting of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel  
held on 24 June 2016**

**Present:****Members of the Panel****Councillors:**

Michael Coker	Warwick District Council
Nicola Davies	Warwickshire County Council
Mike Gittus	Warwickshire County Council
Julie Jackson	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
Phillip Morris-Jones	Warwickshire County Council
Peter Morson	Warwickshire County Council
Derek Poole	Rugby Borough Council
David Reilly	North Warwickshire Borough Council
June Tandy	Warwickshire County Council

**Co-opted Independent members**

Bob Malloy  
Robin Verso

**Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)**

Philip Seccombe	Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
Elizabeth Hall	Treasurer
Neil Hewison	Chief Executive
Rebecca Parsons	Policy and Research Officer
Neil Tipton	Head of Media
Gary Watson	Detective Superintendent, Head of Professional Standards, Warwickshire Police

**Warwickshire County Council Officers**

Sarah Duxbury	Head of Law and Governance
Janet Purcell	Democratic Services Manager
Stefan Robinson	Senior Democratic Services Officer
John Betts	Head of Finance

**1. Appointment of Chair to the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel**

Independent member, Mr Robin Verso, was appointed as Chair of the Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing municipal year.

**2. Appointment of Vice Chair to the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel**

Councillor Nicola Davies was appointed as Vice-Chair of the Police and Crime Panel for the ensuing municipal year.

### **3. General**

#### **(1) Welcome**

The Chair welcomed the new Police and Crime Commissioner to his first Panel meeting, following the elections on 5 May 2016.

#### **(2) Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Moira-Ann Grainger of Warwick District Council (substituted by Councillor Michael Coker).

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor Gwynne Pomfrett of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (substituted by Councillor Julie Jackson).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Stephen Gray from Stratford-upon-Avon District Council.

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

There were no declarations made.

#### **(4) Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 March 2016**

The Panel had identified a discrepancy between the external auditor's statement that the force delivered value for money, and the Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection which stated that value for money could not be demonstrated. Elizabeth Hall, Treasurer of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), explained that the two assessments used different criteria to evaluate value for money. Elizabeth undertook to bring this to the attention of the external auditor.

In response to questions, the Chief Executive of the OPCC, Mr Neil Hewison, explained that Warwickshire had recently been omitted from the list of gold standard police forces in respect of stop and search. He said that Her Majesty's Inspectorate was due to revisit the force on 8 July 2016, when the force aims to be reaccredited with the standard. Mr Hewison said progress had been made and he would report back at the Panel's next meeting.

In relation to questions regarding local government devolution proposals, the Commissioner explained that he would be meeting with neighbouring Commissioners to discuss this, and confirmed that he supported the current governance arrangements for the Alliance. He did not believe it was in the interests of Warwickshire Police and residents to have governance arrangements which involve a West Midlands Mayor.

The Commissioner was advised by members that they had concerns about the former Police and Crime Commissioner's response to the Stakeholder Engagement Task and Finish group's recommendations. Mr Hewison advised that the Panel's

recommendations would be considered as part of the process in the development of the new Engagement Strategy, and confirmed that he would share the draft strategy at the appropriate stage. The new Commissioner is currently focussing on the Police and Crime Plan.

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2016 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

That the Panel receives an update at their next meeting on progress made towards achieving the gold standard accreditation for stop and search.

**4. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions

**5. Warwickshire Police Professional Standards Department Complaints Performance Update**

Detective Superintendent Gary Watson, Head of Professional Standards, introduced this report which provided an update on complaint recording and investigation timeliness for Warwickshire Police. He explained that complaint handling performance took a dip at the end of 2015, following the introduction of a new recording process and new staffing arrangements. Following that, performance was on the rise as a result of the changes made. He said that a significant amount of long standing open cases had recently been closed, resulting in red performance indicators. However, this data was skewed because the outcome of closing those cases was positive. Overall, there had been a reduction in the number of open cases and the speed of resolving cases had improved.

In relation to previous papers received by the Panel, where it was identified that four of the six complainant categories concerned officer integrity, members were disappointed not to see this highlighted in the tabled report. In response to questions, D/Supt Watson explained that officers are put through annual training which covers communication skills and the use of force, which should have an impact on officer discipline and their approach. An induction programme on complaints is also offered.

Members suggested that the current online complaints form was not as user friendly as it could be, and that this should be reviewed, ideally with public involvement. It was specifically highlighted that many people will not know the officer's police number or rank, which are marked as essential criteria on the website. D/Supt Watson explained that many people will know these details, but he would review the form. He clarified that there are numerous ways in which the public can log a complaint including, but not limited to; email, phone, online or at a police station in person. He said that there had been an increase in the number of complaints received, but that this may be associated with the improved promotion of, and accessibility to, complaint logging. He added that when issues can be identified and resolved within a one day period, these are not recorded as complaints.

The Commissioner stated that complaints were an issue that was high on his agenda, and that he would be taking complaints seriously. It is important that they are processed

effectively in order to ensure public confidence in the force. The subject of complaints will be discussed weekly with the Chief Constable, and a meeting record will be published. He highlighted that developments with the Police and Crime Bill may have an impact on complaint processing procedures. Members requested that the Commissioner take into account that some people do not have access to the internet or adequate mobile phone reception in order to make complaints.

**Resolved:**

That the Panel notes the report.

**6. Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report 2015-16**

This report provided an overview of the work carried out over the past year by the previous Police and Crime Commissioner, Ron Ball. The Panel welcomed the report which also provided a helpful end of term summary. The Chair explained that whilst the Panel cannot hold the new Commissioner to account on the matters contained within the report, members could ask questions regarding his intention to continue certain avenues of work.

The Commissioner confirmed his support for Special Constables, which he believes are important to local communities. He added that tackling violent and sexual crimes is a priority and that he would support as many grants as are affordable to support victims of crime. Community Safety Ambassadors would not be part of the Commissioner's future plans but he will develop an alternative means for ensuring that he is engaged with local communities. Members suggested that councillors, Community Safety Partnerships and Community Forums were a good source of specialist local knowledge and public feedback. The Panel suggested that any money saved from removing these posts should be reinvested back into the budget. The Commissioner emphasised that no definitive budget decisions had been made yet.

Members highlighted that in the annual report, there is a reference to the Chief Constable's view that "the rise in recorded crime does not represent a deteriorating picture in our communities". However, they were unsure of what grounds that conclusion was made. Members also suggested that crime recording performance should be considered in more detail in the report. The Commissioner explained that those crimes which are increasing in frequency will receive priority attention.

**Resolved:**

That the Panel formalises and publishes its response to the Police and Crime Commissioner's annual report.

**7. Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Commissioner explained that he was new to the role, and that it had a large scope which required significant learning. He commended Ron Ball on his work in bringing together an efficient and expert staff base, and said that he had no plans for changing the structure or staffing arrangements. His main priorities are to increase police officer numbers and to focus on victims of crime and reducing barriers to their support. In

response to questions from the Panel, the Commissioner said he intended to develop a Victims' Charter.

Members also questioned whether the increase in police response times in the summer period was a consequence of annual leave. Mr Hewison clarified that this was not the case, and that annual leave is managed effectively, with tight controls in place around when leave can be taken. Rather, he said that this was likely a result of summer events taking place, where anti-social behaviour offences are more frequent. He added that specific schemes and operations are launched in this period, requiring extra officer commitment.

The Commissioner was asked whether he had a position regarding Central Government proposals which would enable responsibility for Fire Services to move to Police and Crime Commissioners. The Commissioner clarified that this new power in the Police and Crime Bill was still going through the Parliamentary process, and any changes of this nature would need to be agreed locally. He said that he would be meeting with the Chief Fire Officer and the County Council Cabinet Member for Community Safety in the near future to discuss this.

Responding to questions, Mr Hewison explained that "injury by driving" was categorised as a violent crime because it concerned those events in which there was intent to harm someone with a vehicle. This did not include unintended road traffic accidents. The categorisation of crime was a procedure set by the Home Office and not a local measure.

Members asked the Commissioner to explain his arrangements for managing conflicts of interest. He explained that his declaration of interests was publically available on the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner website. He said that a protocol had been developed to address his position as a Councillor on Stratford-on-Avon District Council and husband to the Leader of Warwickshire County Council. He said that he would expect the Panel to hold him to account and he will carry out his role transparently and independently. He expressed the view that there was also an important role for the Chief Executive of the OPCC in ensuring that the Commissioner upholds high standards and integrity. The Commissioner explained that he intended to recruit a deputy and would develop a job description and person specification for this role. He said he would encourage applicants with a different perspective and background to his own. Mr Hewison advised that a copy of the application pack could be circulated to Panel members in due course.

The Commissioner explained that the Police and Crime Plan would be used to guide his decisions on the budget and precept. He asked the Panel how they would like to be consulted in relation to the development of the Police and Crime Plan. The Chair explained that it would be the Panel's role to assess whether an effective public consultation had been conducted, and the Panel would be pleased to see a draft in September 2016. Mr Tipton (Head of Media) agreed to circulate the draft consultation questions to the Panel. He confirmed that the consultation would include victims of crime and the police force, as well as the public and other stakeholders. Members supported the continuation of the cross-border team funded by the Commissioner. The Commissioner said he would be making a decision to approve an IT system update for the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) software that the cross-border team use.

The Chair highlighted that sickness among officers was at an average level when compared to the national picture. However, staff sickness levels were still relatively high.

Mr Hewison explained that for officers to go from 42<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> in the past year in the national ranking for sickness was a big improvement, but there was still room for further improvement. He said that staff sickness figures seemed resistant to improvement, and that the Chief Constable had taken on an active role in the Health and Wellbeing Board to address this. Members requested that the results of the next staff survey be brought to the Panel, ideally identifying sickness in days as well as percentages.

The Panel requested that the following actions be undertaken:

- The Panel receives an update on work that has been commissioned regarding the analysis of the increase in “other sexual offences”.
- The Panel receives the draft questions for the Police and Crime Plan consultation.
- The Panel receives the application pack for the role of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.
- The Commissioner reports back on the increase of out of court settlements and the justification for this.
- The Commissioner reports back on the Health and Wellbeing survey including sickness levels.

**Resolved:**

That the Panel note the report and request the appropriate persons to provide the Panel with updates as requested.

## **8. Appointment of Working Groups**

**Resolved:**

The Panel confirms the continuation of the Budget Working Group and the Planning and Performance Working Group. The Panel agrees that the Chair will be an ex officio member of both working groups and any Task and Finish groups that are set up. Councillor Mike Gittus is a new member of the Budget Working Group and the Chair asked Councillor Davies to serve on the Planning and Performance Group (She has subsequently agreed to this).

## **9. Budget Working Group – Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 June 2016**

The Chair, as Chair of the Budget Working Group, provided an overview of the minutes, explaining that financial controls and forecasting had improved since the 2014/15 outturn report but had not improved sufficiently to be confident that significant underspending will not reoccur in 2016/17. He said that the same story had been revealed at the end of each financial year since 2012/13 i.e. significant underspending that had not been predicted in January each year when the new budget was set, resulting in increasing reserves which would be even higher were it not for the decision each year to use some of the underspending for capital purposes. The Chair requested that the Commissioner reflect on

this trend, and use it to inform his decisions about the future precept and the appropriate level of reserves to maintain. Elizabeth Hall explained that she was happy with the level of reserves given that there was an upcoming period of uncertainty. She said that reserves would reduce because there were significant capital projects to fund in the ensuing year, and that underspends have emerged in part due to savings made through the Strategic Alliance. The Commissioner said that a realistic level of reserves was required in order to protect the police against financial claims and funding uncertainties. The Chair drew attention to the table attached to the minutes, which showed reserves being at about the same high level as in 2012/13, and reserves not being reduced as planned because of continued significant underspending.

## **10. Work Programme 2016-17**

### **Resolved:**

The programme was noted and agreed as timetabled.

## **11. Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items

The Commissioner asked what training Panel members were undertaking in order to carry out their role. The Chair explained that members have had training in the past and that there is some scheduled for later in the year, including the Annual Police and Crime Panel Conference. Furthermore, members are often trained and experienced in overview and scrutiny in other councils, a role that requires similar skills. The Chair said he would like the Panel to have more training opportunities.

## **12. Date of Meetings 2016-17**

### **Resolved:**

Officers consider if any alternative dates are available for future Panel meetings as some members cannot attend on Fridays.

## **13. Procedure for Confirmation Hearing for the Chief Finance Officer of the Office of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner**

Sarah Duxbury, Head of Law and Governance, outlined the procedure for the confirmation hearing for the Chief Financial Officer. She highlighted that the candidate, Elizabeth Hall, underwent a confirmation hearing before the Panel in 2015 for a temporary appointment. She explained that this meeting was for a permanent appointment, and it was the role of the Panel to consider the applicant's professional competency and provide independent advice to the Commissioner. As part of this process, the Commissioner would need to set out his views on her suitability, and the Panel have the option to recommend appointment, but not to veto.

**Resolved:**

That the Panel notes the procedure

**14. Confirmation Hearing for the Chief Finance Officer of the Office of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Commissioner gave his positive views as to the candidate's suitability for the role. In doing so, he highlighted that this was an extremely important job, that Elizabeth had made a personal commitment to the role and that he supported her appointment.

**Resolved:**

That the Panel recommends Elizabeth Hall's appointment to the permanent role of Chief Finance officer for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

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

**Resolved:**

The Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel agreed 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 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**16. Complaints**

The Panel considered any complaints made against the Police and Crime Commissioner and his office as set out in the exempt minutes.

The meeting rose at 12:15 pm

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Chairman