

# Warwickshire

## Police and Crime Panel

Annual Report 2018/19



North Warwickshire  
Borough Council

Nuneaton  
&  
Bedworth



RUGBY  
COUNCIL



Warwickshire  
County Council



Warwickshire  
POLICE



Philip Secombe  
Police and Crime  
Commissioner  
for Warwickshire



## Chair's Forward



As a scrutiny body the role of the Police and Crime Panel is often referred to as that of a 'critical friend.' What does that mean?

As a Panel our aim has been to fulfil the role of a trusted body whose members ask challenging and provocative questions, examine data carefully and take the time to fully understand the context of decision making and outcomes. The characterisation of the Panel as a 'critical and supportive friend' has been particularly appropriate during 2018/19.

The unexpected unilateral announcement by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner of withdrawal from the strategic alliance with Warwickshire Police was a defining point of the year.

The Panel has valued the constructive, open and trusting way in which the Commissioner, his Chief Executive and wider staff have engaged with the Panel. The willingness of the Chief Constable to meet with the Panel on two occasions through the year is acknowledged and appreciated.

The Panel will continue to monitor and scrutinise the withdrawal from the current strategic alliance and emerging future arrangements throughout 2019/20 and beyond.

Throughout the past year the Panel has delivered a work programme ranging from exploring health and wellbeing with the Force and the impact of officer body worn cameras to understanding the role of restorative justice. The Panel has scrutinised the impact of the Commissioner's 'Victims and Witnesses Charter,' launched in November 2017. The Panel has monitored closely the efforts to release reserves of funding available to Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire County Council to promote and enforce road safety and welcomed the launch of the 'Road Safety Grant Scheme.'

In February 2019, the Panel supported the Commissioner's proposal to increase the local policing precept by £24pa for band D properties. The Government had allowed Police and Crime Commissioners to increase the precept by 12%. The Panel unanimously supported the Commissioner in seeking the maximum increase after carefully considering the proposals made by the Commissioner and Chief Constable that the increased revenue would provide 100 additional police officers and staff.

In the year ahead the Panel will focus on the financial footprint of Warwickshire Police as a standalone force post Alliance, the delivery of additional officers and police staff as provided for within the Precept and the need for a fairer funding formula from central Government. The challenges presented by rural crime and the importance of achieving outcomes in all types of crime will be closely scrutinised.

It has been a pleasure to serve as Chair of the Panel. I would like to extend my personal thanks to all Panel members and to both Tom McColgan, Democratic Service and Jane Pollard, Legal Services, for their advice and professionalism.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Councillor Nicola Davies  
Chair of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

## Key Activities and Achievements

The Police and Crime Panel performed its role as the Commissioner's critical friend over six meetings held in public last year, scrutinising and challenging the Commissioner on the delivery of the four priorities identified in the Police and Crime Plan:

- Putting victims and survivors first
- Protecting people from harm
- Ensuring efficient and effective policing
- Preventing and reducing crime

All the reports considered by the panel and minutes of the meetings can be found on the [Warwickshire County Council website](#). Panel meetings are also live streamed at <https://warwickshire.public-i.tv> and the footage is available for 12 months after each meeting.

### **2019/20 Budget**

The Police and Crime Panel has a statutory duty to review the Commissioner's budget and can veto the budget if it thinks the proposed increase in the policing precept is either too high or too low.

In February 2019 the Panel considered the Commissioner's proposed budget for 2019/20 which after careful scrutiny, the Panel resolved to support. The Commissioner's proposed budget included an increase in the local policing precept of £24 pa for band D properties and the creation of 100 new police officer and staff posts.

When considering the 2018/19 budget the Panel highlighted the importance of the pre-budget consultation and of gaining the views of residents from across the County. The Panel were pleased to see that the Commissioner had successfully increased participation with over 2,500 residents responding to this year's consultation; the majority of whom had supported a 12% increase in the precept if this increase created 100 additional officer and staff posts. The Panel also heard from Martin Jelly, Chief Constable for Warwickshire Police who felt that increasing the local policing precept by the maximum amount would help to protect against the uncertainty caused by the end of the Strategic Alliance in addition to funding new posts.

The Panel recognised the desire for an increase in police numbers from residents but were concerned that the Police would struggle to recruit to the additional posts given that the uplift in officer numbers included in the 2018/19 budget had not been realised. The Panel also urged to the Commissioner to manage residents' expectations about when the new officers would be on the streets; it takes time to recruit and train new officers which means there will be a delay between increasing council tax and seeing more police on the streets.

Several members of the Panel reported that residents had expressed concerns about rural crime to them and welcomed the Rural Crime Team the Chief Constable proposed to establish. The Rural Crime Team will bring together specialists already working in the force into a single team to tackle crimes such as unauthorised encampments, coursing and theft from farms. The Panel asked the Commissioner to go back to the Chief Constable and ask him to consider creating two rural crime teams to cover the north and south of the county.

### **Strategic Alliance**

Since the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia announced that he would be withdrawing from the Strategic Alliance with Warwickshire the subject has loomed large over the Panel's meetings. The vast majority of Warwickshire Police's budget was pooled in the Alliance and services from local policing to forensics to HR were provided by the Alliance.

The Panel held a special meeting to discuss the alliance on 25 October 2018 and have received updates from the Commissioner at meetings since. The Planning and Performance Working Group have also received regular updates on the progress towards leaving the alliance and the Budget working group has scrutinised the financial implications. The Panel also received a briefing in May 2019 from the Commissioner on the structure of an independent Warwickshire Police.

### **Athena**

Warwickshire Police introduced a new software platform that brought together investigations, intelligence, case and custody modules into a single software ecosystem. The launch proved challenging and negatively impacted on performance and the reliability of data being reported by the Force. The Crown Prosecution Service also felt that the quality of cases being passed to them by the police had fallen since Athena's implementation. Warwickshire Police was not alone in experiencing issues with Athena and it has been criticised by Forces nationally.

The Commissioner's office had prepared an in-depth report into the implementation of Athena and the Force responded by developing an action plan. Led by the Planning and Performance Working Group the Panel has kept a close eye on both the quality of data being reported and the Commissioner's challenge to the Force to improve the situation. As of March 2019 significant progress has been made and the backlog of work that had built up following the introduction of Athena has largely been cleared. This had required an uplift in resources which means that some of the expected savings that had driven the move to Athena would not be realised.

## Looking Forward...

2019/20 will be no less eventful for the Panel; beginning with the announcement of the proposed structure of a standalone Warwickshire Police Service and ending with the third Police and Crime Commissioner Elections.

The end of the **Strategic Alliance** with West Mercia will impact on the structure of Warwickshire Police with shared posts being separated and around 200 staff based in West Mercia moving back to Warwickshire. Local Policing was the largest single aspect of the Alliance and was devolved to local control in April 2019. This leaves about 40% of Warwickshire Police's budget committed to the Alliance until October 2019 covering services from Forensics and Intelligence to ICT, HR and Finance.

While the structure of Local Policing remained largely the same when it left the Alliance, this will not be the case for other services where roles have been shared across the Alliance. The Commissioner has the challenge of working with the Chief Constable to re-establish Warwickshire Police as an independent force with a sustainable financial position. Both the Commissioner and Chief Constable have stressed that this also represents an opportunity to develop new ways of working and explore alternative avenues for collaboration.

The Panel's role as 'critical friend' will be to challenge the Commissioner to gain assurance that the new force structure will continue to provide a high standard of service to Warwickshire residents as well as support the development of new policies.

The **Budget Working Group** will be scrutinising in detail the impact of leaving the Alliance on the 2019/20 budget and the medium term financial plan. The budget was devised with an assumed cost for the Force from October 2019. As the shape of Warwickshire Police becomes clear so will the cost of running it and the budget may have to be revised to more accurately reflect new budgetary demands. While the decision to designate Leek Wootton as force headquarters will allow officers returning to Warwickshire to be housed with minimal investment in infrastructure, the decision to not sell the entire estate will have a significant impact on the expected capital receipts forecasted in the medium term financial plan.

Warwickshire is a largely rural county and members of the panel had heard from residents who lived away from urban centres that they felt disconnected from their local police and more vulnerable to crime as a result. The Panel will be looking at **rural crime** in the coming year with the Commissioner bringing a report back to the Panel showing the work undertaken by the new rural crime team and the impact it's had.



The Commissioner is directly funding a new **Victims' Service** and the Panel has asked for a report in September 2019 to detail what work the service has undertaken since it was commissioned in early 2019. Of particular interest is how this work is imbedded throughout Warwickshire Police and how it informs how the Force operates.

The **Planning and Performance Working Group** will continue to scrutinise the services targeting **drug and alcohol misuse** which they began at the end of 2018/19. This scrutiny work will take in feedback from a range of partners including Public Health and the Community and Voluntary Sector. The Group will seek to explore how the Commissioner allocates funding, how targets are set and performance tracked, and if there are examples of best practice in drug and alcohol interventions that could be implemented to improve the Commissioner's work in this area.

The Panel will also be looking at drug and alcohol misuse through a report from the Commissioner on **County Lines**. There has been significant media attention around the county line phenomenon (drug gangs moving their operations out of urban centres and into smaller towns) and residents across the County were concerned that organised crime groups operating in the West Midlands may move into Warwickshire.

## Membership for 2019/20

There are 12 members of the Police and Crime Panel representing the six first and second tier authorities in Warwickshire as well as two independent members. The membership of the panel is politically and geographically balanced. Each district or borough area is represented by one councillor from the district/ borough and a county councillor who represents an electoral division in that area. The number of seats allocated to the political parties is determined by the number of seats held by that party across all the authorities.

The two independent members are politically neutral and are appointed to the Panel for four year terms.

The Membership for 2019/20 is:

### **District and Borough Representatives**

Councillor David Reilly	North Warwickshire Borough Council
Councillor Chris Watkins	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
Councillor Derek Poole	Rugby Borough Council
Councillor Sarah Whalley-Hogins	Stratford-on-Avon district Council
Councillor Ian Davison	Warwick District Council

### **Warwickshire County Council Representatives**

Councillor Andy Wright  
Councillor Pete Gilbert  
Councillor Maggie O'Rourke  
Councillor Nicola Davies  
Councillor Jenny Fradgley

### **Independent Members**

Andy Davis  
Bob Malloy