

Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

Thursday, 19 September 2019

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor David Reilly (Chair)
Councillor Derek Poole (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nicola Davies
Andy Davis
Councillor Ian Davison
Councillor Jenny Fradgley
Councillor Peter Gilbert
Bob Malloy
Councillor Maggie O'Rourke
Councillor Sarah Whalley-Hoggins
Councillor Christopher Watkins
Councillor Andrew Wright

Officers

Jane Pollard, Legal Service Manager (Corporate)
Nichola Vine, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Legal and Democratic)

Others Present

Councillor Neil Dirveiks

1. General

(1) Apologies

There were none.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

(3) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

2. Public Question Time

The Chair invited Councillor Holland to put his question to the Police and Crime Commissioner. Councillor Holland asked:

"Can the Police and Crime Commissioner please review Warwickshire Police's policy of enforcement of road traffic weight limits across Warwickshire and report back to this Panel? Across the County we have many historic buildings and bridges that are protected by weight limits to prevent damage from vibration and load stresses caused by heavy vehicles. There is a perception that Warwickshire Police no longer routinely enforce a number of areas Road Traffic Act legislation, including weight limits. If this is the case I have concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of the roads policing service. Can commercial vehicle policing be developed in Warwick town centre with a view to roll out across the County?"

The Commissioner responded that he did not agree with Councillor Holland that there was a perception that Warwickshire Police did not enforce vehicle weight limits. He stated that he recognised the need for weight limits to protect historic buildings and other road users and that any road user breaking those limits was breaking the law. Chief Inspector Adrian Davis added that there were expert officers who undertook inspections of vehicle loads. Earlier in the week officers had been active on the M6 and had intercepted 23 overloaded vehicles. Adrian Davis offered to prepare a briefing note for the next meeting to give more detail on enforcement work in Warwick.

Councillor Holland welcomed the proposal report back to the next committee and stated that he had nothing but praise for the work of the Warwick Safer Neighbourhood Team.

3. Police and Crime Commissioner's Report

The Commissioner introduced his report and provided an update on policing numbers which had increased from the position reported in the papers. He also highlighted the increasing level of diversity among officers.

Councillor Whalley-Hoggins asked if more detail could be included in the performance summary at the start of the report.

The Commissioner responded that the reports were useful documents drawn up by the Assurance and Service Improvement Team (ASI) in the Force. He stated that ASI were currently an Alliance function and a new Warwickshire team would need to be established which provided an opportunity to review the key performance indicators and how performance was reported.

Andy Davis suggested that the Planning and Performance Working Group work with the OPCC to review the performance reports.

In response to Councillor O'Rourke, The Commissioner stated that repeat victimisation would be picked up by the Harm Hub which was based at Bedworth but operated County wide.

Councillor Davies stated that the report showed 'exceptional volumes' of child at risk markers applied to cases. She noted the explanation that this was due to an improvement in the use of keywords rather than an increase in crimes involving children but sought assurances that the Commissioner would monitor levels to ensure that this was the case.

The Commissioner responded that the Athena Case management software was only as reliable as the information that was entered into it and while use of the system had improved there were still issues around keywords. David Patterson added that the most recent data did show that 'child at risk' markers had returned to expected levels but that it would be monitored going forward.

Councillor Whalley-Hoggins noted that while instances of domestic violence had increased there had not been a similar increase in the use of Domestic Violence Protection Notices which might be expected.

David Patterson responded that it was a good point and an area about which the OPCC was trying to gain a better understanding.

The Chair stated that the he was concerned about the levels of victim satisfaction reported in the papers particularly the fall from 96% satisfaction at first contact to 64% satisfaction around follow up for victims of domestic abuse. The Chair asked if the report due to come to the Panel on the Victims Service could be expanded to include a closer look at satisfaction levels..

David Patterson responded that the Commissioner had challenged the Force on victim satisfaction and it was an area senior officers had recognised as an issue. A group within the Force with involvement from the OPCC had been established to look at the victim journey and ensure that performance indicators were measuring the right things. The Commissioner added that domestic violence was a societal issue and while the police response and improving the journey of victims was important it needed a whole system approach to truly address the issue.

In response to Councillor O'Rourke, the Commissioner stated that encouraging victims to report crimes required a two-pronged approach from the Police. Firstly, victims needed to feel confident that they would be listened to and their reports taken seriously and then secondly the police needed to be able to act on those reports and deliver positive outcomes.

In response to Councillor Whalley-Hoggins, The Commissioner acknowledged that there had been an increase in reported crimes in the Stratford on Avon area but noted that the levels were still relatively low. He stated that the new officers being recruited would increase the strength of the safer neighbourhood teams improving local policing.

4. Police and Crime Plan 2016 – 2021

The Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the revision of his Police and Crime Plan.

In response to The Chair, Neil Tipton stated that the exact dates of the consultation on the revised Police and Crime Plan had not yet been set but it would run from October to December. The consultation would cover a broader area than just the revised plan and would run in partnership with Warwickshire Police. Responses to the consultation would also help inform what information was provided with the precept consultation in January 2020.

Councillor Davison stated that a large number of organisations had declared a 'climate emergency' and produced action plans demonstrating how they would meet the Government's targets for carbon neutrality. He asked if the Commissioner had considered declaring a climate emergency for his office or the Force as a whole.

The Commissioner stated that he had asked the Force to investigate adding electric vehicles to the fleet and providing charging points on the police estate. He stated that the Police estate was already fairly energy efficient but there were opportunities to make improvements especially around generating renewable energy. The Commissioner stated that he would bring a plan back to the Panel.

Councillor Gilbert cautioned that it was important for the priority to remain providing the Force with the right equipment to police the County and for public funds to be spent efficiently and responsibly. It may be that an electric fleet may not be economically viable given current prices.

5. OPCC 2018/19 Annual Report

The Panel noted the final version of the annual report.

6. Road Safety Presentation

Chief Inspector Adrian Davis, Warwickshire Police and Abby Simkin, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner gave a presentation outlining Warwickshire Police's approach to road policing and the OPCC's grant funding for community road safety schemes (appendix 1).

In response to Councillor O'Rourke, Adrian Davis stated that he would be happy for Councillors to join the Police on a ride along and see road policing in action. He also sought to provide some reassurance that his team targeted specific vehicles and that the rates of drivers without proper insurance or licenses did not reflect the general population of road users. The penalty for using mobile phones while driving had increased and hauliers who were caught committing distraction offences also risked losing their jobs.

Councillor Gilbert stated that there was a general perception that the standard of driving was declining and asked what was done to ensure that driving instructors were passing on best practice to students.

Adrian Davis responded that the driving test was a much more robust test than it had previously been, but he would take away the suggestion to engage with instructors.

In response to Councillor Gilbert, Adrian Davis stated that every incident needed to be taken on its own merits and that both drivers and cyclists were guilty of using the road irresponsibly on occasion.

Councillor Davison stated that it would be helpful to see the longer term trends around those killed and seriously injured on the roads to understand who the victims were and what structural changes could be made to improve road safety.

The Chair responded that the Safer Warwickshire Partnership was looking at trends and would be able to bring this work back to the Panel.

Adrian Davis stated that part of the safer roads partnership's work would be to examine trends and look for areas where engineering work was necessary. He stated that a lot of incidents occurred in

30 mile per hour zone where there were no road improvements needed, it was more about a snapshot in time where inattentiveness and bad luck led to a collision.

In response to Bob Malloy, Adrian Davis stated that there was sufficient resources already within Warwickshire to maintain the same level of road policing outside of the Strategic Alliance. There would actually be an increase in resources available as fire arms officers assisted with road policing when not required for their primary duty and more fire arms officers would be based in Warwickshire after October.

In response to Councillor Dirveiks, Abby Simkin stated the bike upcycling scheme did mention a positive impact on anti-social behaviour as a potential benefit but funding had only just been awarded and schemes were not yet up and running.

Councillor Davies stated that she had asked for an update from the County Council and had been informed that the first meeting of the road safety partnership would not be meeting until October with no budget for road safety improvements likely before February 2020. Councillor Davies asked if the Commissioner felt that the Council was providing enough support.

The Commissioner responded that his office had put a lot into re-establishing the road safety partnership and it was regrettable that it had broken down in the first place. He stated that he had been keen start work as soon as possible and so his office had launched the grant scheme without the County Council's involvement.

In response to Bob Malloy, The Commissioner confirmed that around ¼ million pounds in funding was received each year from road safety courses which could be used to continue the grants scheme.

Councillor Watkins asked for more information on; applying for the second round of grants funding, Operation SNAP, Community Speed Watch and whether the road safety team carry out seasonal checks on delivery vehicles. He also asked whether recycled bikes could be passed to Warwickshire Young Carers and that the road safety messages could be sent out to Councillors across the county.

Abby Simkin stated that she would be able to provide a written response to the Panel.

7. Police and Crime Panel Working Groups

The Panel confirmed the terms of reference and membership of the two working groups.

8. Work Programme

The following items were suggested for the work plan:

21 November 2019

Preparations for 2020 elections
The Police Estate

3 February 2019

Police and Crime Commissioners Budget and Precept

02 April 2019

Victim Services Review

Victim Satisfaction

Rural Crime

Repeat Victimisation

Warwickshire Police as an independent force – six month update

9. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved: That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

10. Exempt Minutes - 20 June 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting as amended were agreed as a correct record.

11. Complaints

There were none