

# Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

Thursday, 24 September 2020

## Minutes

### Attendance

#### Committee Members

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

#### Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

Philip Seccombe, Police & Crime Commissioner  
David Patterson, Development and Policy Lead - Performance  
Neil Hewison, Chief Executive  
Sara Ansell, Treasurer  
Precious Williamson, Lead for Commissioning and Engagement

#### Officers

Deborah Moseley, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
John Cole, Trainee Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Jane Pollard, Legal Advisor  
Virginia Rennie, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Strategic Finance)

#### Guests

Gavin McArthur, Joint Audit and Standards Committee

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

Councillor Derek Poole nominated Councillor David Reilly to serve as Chair to the Panel for the coming year. Councillor Andrew Wright seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and Councillor Reilly was elected unanimously as Chair to the Police and Crime Panel for 2020/21.

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

Councillor David Reilly nominated Councillor Derek Poole to serve as Vice Chair to the Panel for the coming year. Councillor Pete Gilbert seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations and Councillor Poole was elected unanimously as Vice Chair to the Police and Crime Panel for 2020/21.

## **3. General**

### **(1) Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Andy Davies (Independent Member).

### **(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

None.

### **(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **(4) Public Speaking**

None.

## **4. Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the report. He observed that virtual meetings were working well and allowing business to conduct as efficiently as in normal times.

The draft Annual Report was presented as an appendix to the main report and comments from the Panel were welcomed.

The Commissioner provided an update on the Warwickshire Police establishment, reporting that over the last financial year, Warwickshire Police had recruited 216 new police officers which was a 14% increase, almost double the rate of the next highest police force in England and Wales. The current strength was, therefore, 1029 and budgeted to rise to 1059 by the 31 March 2021. The Commissioner added that there were two new rural crime teams and two new vehicle crime teams, a new county wide child abuse and exploitation team, enhanced safer neighbourhood team, more detectives and more response officers. New recruits were initially posted to the response teams and were tutored by tutor constables.

The report also set the scene for diversity, equality and inclusion, ahead of the work programme item planned for the November meeting. The report set out the numbers of BAME officers leaving the force. The report set out the work of the Positive Action Team in terms of BAME recruitment.

The report also detailed performance and set out changes to personnel in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Commissioner noted that the Panel had received notice of the preferred candidate for appointment as Chief Executive and the procedure for a confirmation hearing would need to be carried out. The Commissioner noted there would be financial challenges ahead particularly due to Covid-19 but that he had regularly met with the Chief Constable throughout the pandemic and was pleased to note that despite following rules around self-isolation and social distancing, the force itself had been relatively resilient throughout the pandemic.

In relation to the budget and finance going forward, the Commissioner noted that the budget, which would have set out the priorities and spending amounts to be allocated to the Home Office had been delayed from November. A three year settlement on revenue and a four year settlement on capital was still anticipated which would enable an element of future planning.

Initially focussing on the information provided in relation to diversity, equality and inclusion, Members of the Panel asked a number of questions as set out below.

Councillor Ian Davison noted the figures given in the report which showed the BAME police officers and staff who had recently left Warwickshire Police over the period January to March 2020 and also data relating to those BAME police officers who had left the force over the last 5 years. He asked if there was 5 year data available for staff and PCSOs and whether the staff retention rates represented a long term trend and, if so, whether this level of turnover had raised any concern. The Commissioner responded that at the time of the last census, the BAME population stood at 7.2% and the BAME proportion of police officers currently stood at 5%, which was a close reflection of local population. BAME communities represented approximately 10% of police staff and if all 2000 employees were put together (ie staff and officers) this would result in a level above 7.2% . He was confident that efforts to positively encourage the BAME community to join the force would result in a further increase following the latest recruitment round. It was normal to lose approximately 60-70 officers per year principally on retirement due to the 30 year career limit so the commissioner was not alarmed at the report stating 17 BAME officers had left the force during the past 5 years. There was a higher turnover in staff - doing detective jobs, control room, teams within finance and HR – as there had been some new recruitment taking place as a result of the ending of the alliance with West Mercia. The 5 year position for staff and PCSOs was not available and some clarity would be sought from the Chief Constable.

The Commissioner reported that the data provided represented the most up to date figures available. David Patterson added that the Assurance and Service Improvement Team were creating a framework for diversity and inclusion which was currently scoping relevant information. Whilst this was a work in progress, there was a desire to ascertain the position within the force.

Councillor Sarah Whalley-Hoggins commented on the high level of new recruits who would need mentoring to become good, experienced officers and asked for further up to date detail on how many uniformed officers were supporting junior constables and how the handover of experience from officers leaving the force was managed. Neil Hewison, Chief Executive, added that whilst there had been an influx of new officers, they were all without exception being tutored on response shifts across the force. The force was still following guidelines for the training and development of new officers and whilst demand on tutors was significant, they were providing meaningful tutorage. The complexion of the response team was becoming young in age and service but new officers needed to work their way through the system over a period of 2-3 years and had experienced

colleagues to support them ready for the completion of their probation periods. Some concern remained that response officers were relatively young in experience as this represented an efficiency consideration fundamental to the 'golden hour'. The Commissioner advised that of the 216 new recruits, 53 were experienced officers transferring to the force, including fire arms officers, and that as the control room was now based in Warwickshire, a more local response was being provided which resulted in improved decision making. The Panel requested that the Commissioner provide more information at the next meeting on the confidence and efficiency of dealing with the 'golden hour'.

Councillor Jenny Fradgley noted the Commissioner had reported on the enhancement of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) and commented that it was important that elected members be kept informed of changes to the teams. The Commissioner advised that the deployment of the Teams was within the remit of the Chief Constable but the Commissioner promoted the value of ensuring the SNTs and PCSOs spent time talking with partners, schools and other organisations on their patch. Likewise, he would always encourage elected members to engage with and report concerns to the SNTs. Councillor Pete Gilbert echoed sentiments about the importance of building a relationship with local elected members. In response to a request to receive regular updates to SNT contact information, David Patterson noted that this information was held by the force and available on the Police.uk website.

Reflecting on the annual report, Councillor Derek Poole asked for clarification of the Commissioner's involvement in the Blue Light Commercial Limited Company. The Commissioner advised that all PCCs were required to take on national responsibility and he had been asked to join the Blue Light Commercial Limited Company as one of five PCC directors (the board was made of 9 individuals). He received no allowance, salary or wage payment. The Company was established and based in Birmingham and was fully funded by the Home Office. It offered opportunities to make savings through joint procurement and he would be looking to ensure that Warwickshire benefited from this. The Commissioner confirmed that a complete list of his interests was available on his website.

With regard to the Annual Report, questions were also put to the Commissioner regarding the evolution of the Covid Supplement and how the outcomes of engagement work on Public Priorities would be used given the impact of Covid-19 and the changing profile of crime. The Commissioner responded that the Covid supplement was an evolving document and he would be happy to share a link to the document online. Face to face engagement had been curtailed by social restrictions relating to Covid-19 but the public continued to engage via post and email and the Commissioner had also joined some virtual meetings.

Moving on to the performance report, Councillor Ian Davison noted the report raised questions about the outcome of Operation Spiggott and asked if the model would be rolled out further. The Commissioner noted that this issue came out of a report on violence without injuries and hotspots in Warwickshire - Atherstone, Warwick and Leamington, Warwick District and Rugby. Rugby was chosen for the pilot of Operation Spiggott which involved specific teams and surveillance to find out what was happening with regard to crime in Rugby particularly with offensive weapons and secondly to work out a plan with partners to reduce the numbers of residents carrying knives. It was resource intensive, hence the pilot, which went well but South Leamington was another area where some serious crimes carried out leading to fatalities and residents were concerned and wanted more protection. There was now more joint working with other organisations, eg registered social landlords, the District Council, health service, GPs and CCGs and this close working was

necessary to tackle these problems. A greater understanding of why young people, especially those who were vulnerable, were carrying offensive weapons was needed and he believed there was a fine line between being a perpetrator and victim and they needed support to be responsible members of society. Specific detail of Operation Spiggott would need to be provided by the Chief Constable. He did not know whether the model would be rolled out further.

David Patterson, Development and Policy Lead – Performance, commented on Operation Switch, led by the local Safer Neighbourhood Team in Leamington which had taken place over August resulting in eight drug arrests which demonstrated there was some successful activity in Leamington albeit with a different operation name.

Councillor Ian Davison also commented on the expansion of the problem solving model as detailed in the scrutiny performance report and asked if the model was not working everywhere what ability was there to replicate it? The Commissioner commented that closer working with the Regional Organised Crime Unit was required to deal with County Lines issues. It was part-funded, had officers seconded to it and, as a growing organisation, had had some success with a number of arrests and charges brought. County Lines gangs originated in London and Birmingham and there was no doubt that access to a diverse range of communities through the motorway network was attractive. Deprived communities were not necessarily a target but it did take up a huge amount of resource, not just from the Police but also relying on intelligence from the fire service, mental health organisations and CCGs. Neil Hewison, Chief Executive, added that the SOCJAG approach had been re-energised over the previous six months lead by a senior member of Warwickshire County Council which had given it more focus and a multi-agency approach to intervention to deal with serious organised crime, including County Lines type issues. Work continued to divert young people away from activity. SOCJAG is a multi-agency forum supported by an operational group which meets monthly. During the pandemic, time had been taken to reflect on operations and a decision to reinvigorate the approach had been taken leading to a different more effective format to deliver meaningful outcomes in communities.

Also referencing the performance report, Councillor Nicola Davies asked for reassurance during the current time of remote working which was putting pressure on service provision, that support services for repeat victims of domestic abuse were operating as fully as could be and would continue to do so over the following six months as pressure increased due to the ongoing restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic. The Commissioner was pleased that it appeared victims had the courage and confidence in the system to report these crimes and acknowledged the potential for an increase in the crime rate over lockdown. Whilst the Covid-19 crisis had put a spotlight on the issue and more people had reported abuse, he felt that this had been a gradual increase rather than a dramatic spike. Neil Hewison, Chief Executive, pointed out that the OPCC had commissioned a review of the police response to domestic abuse and vulnerability during Covid-19. Led by Richard Long, key individuals across the force had been interviewed and a comprehensive report had been produced focussing on concerns around how to respond during lockdown, how to effectively manage risk, how the force managed ongoing risk to repeat victims and how they got the support required from agencies and specialists. This had formed the basis of a deep dive 4-6 weeks previously and there had been detailed reassurance around the response to Covid-19. The PCC had successfully secured national funding from the Ministry of Justice and Home Office to provide support – and was one of only 7 or 8 forces that had been granted additional funds – which supported provision of additional ISVAs and the ongoing PCC Covid Recovery Fund was looking to continue to provide support to all of those agencies and organisations who were providing support to victims of domestic and sexual violence and drug and

alcohol abuse. Sara Ansell, Treasurer, added that the additional funding secured was a significant sum of 470K which was being used to provide services across the whole county.

The Chair welcomed the work the Office of the PCC was doing with the County Council through the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board but he noted that it was not a statutory authority unlike the four Community Safety Partnerships and urged the Commissioner to work more closely with those partnerships. The commissioner noted that there was a complicated web of lines between organisations and that whilst the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board was not a decision making body, it was a good place to promote ideas, as recently demonstrated by the Chief Fire Officer promoting the Tri Service Role through the partnership as well as through the Blue Light Collaboration Board. Community Safety Partnerships were an important part of the business and their work was monitored.

The Chair also noted that a number of ex-Warwickshire Officers were now working for the Commissioner's Office and asked how those officers were being supported to review interventions on projects they may have been involved with. The Commissioner advised that of the 12 roles which supported the Office, four were taken by ex-police officers and as the Chief Executive was retiring, that number would reduce as the preferred candidate for his replacement was not an ex-police officer. He noted that some of the panel were ex-police officers themselves and he felt that the degree of challenge being exercised was appropriate and proportionate.

#### *Actions:*

- *That the Commissioner provide more information at the next meeting on the confidence and efficiency of dealing with the 'golden hour' in light of the age demographic within the force.*
- *That the PAT Team be invited to provide a presentation on BAME representation and the Force's approach to recruitment and retention at the next meeting.*

### **5. Recruitment of a New Independent Panel Member**

The Panel noted that selection interviews for shortlisted candidates were due to take place on 1 October 2020.

### **6. Work Programme**

The work programme was noted together with the addition of a presentation from the PAT Team on BAME representation and the Force's approach to recruitment and retention.

### **7. Dates of Meetings**

The Chair invited the Panel to take note of the future meeting dates:

- Thursday 19 November 2020
- Monday 1 February 2021

Thursday 1 April 2021

### **8. Any Urgent Items**

There was no urgent business.

## **9. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information**

### **Resolved:**

'That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972'.

## **10. Presentation from the Chief Constable of Warwickshire Police**

Martin Jelley, Chief Constable made a presentation to the Panel which covered the force's vision, the response to Covid-19, transition and rebuilding following the alliance with West Mercia, performance, strategic priorities, anticipated challenges in the year ahead, and the financial position.

The Chair expressed the Panel's gratitude to the Chief Constable for his attendance and honesty and the Chief Constable left the meeting at this point.

## **11. Exempt Minutes**

**Resolved:** That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **12. Complaints**

There were none.

The meeting rose at 1.23pm

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Chair