

Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

Monday 15 November 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor David Reilly (Chair) (North Warwickshire Borough Council)
Councillor Barbara Brown (Warwickshire County Council)
Andrew Davies (Independent Member)
Andy Davis (Independent Member)
Councillor Ian Davison (Warwick District Council)
Councillor Clare Golby (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council)
Councillor John Holland (Warwickshire County Council)
Councillor Dave Humphreys (Warwickshire County Council)
Councillor Christopher Kettle (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher (Warwickshire County Council)
Councillor Derek Poole (Vice Chair) (Rugby Borough Council)

Officers

John Cole, Democratic Services Officer
Caroline Gutteridge, Team Lead Senior Solicitor, Planning & Litigation
Virginia Rennie, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Strategic Finance)

Others Present

David Carter, Joint Audit and Standards Committee
Christopher Lewis, Development and Policy Lead, Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner
Dave Patterson, Development and Policy Lead, Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner
Polly Reed, Chief Executive, Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner
Philip Seccombe, Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner
Debbie Tedds, Chief Constable, Warwickshire Police
Neil Tipton, Head of Media and Communications, Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Jenny Fradgley.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Golby stated that her employment had changed but she had not yet updated the

register of interests; however, there were no conflicts of interest.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

(4) Public Speaking

There was none.

2. Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) introduced his report, stating that the draft Police and Crime Plan and Gypsy Roma and Traveller report would be discussed separately. The Commissioner advised that, in response to Councillor Holland's query at the previous meeting, the report included details of establishment for police officers since 2012. He reported that an application to the Government's Safer Streets Fund had been accepted; funding of £249,000 had been secured, providing improved resources to address violence against women and girls. He reported that £200,000 had been awarded by the Home Office under the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Scheme.

(1) Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025

The Police and Crime Commissioner presented his draft Police and Crime Plan to the Panel, stating that it would be embellished with images and graphics prior to being formally launched. He stated that the Plan reflected the commitments presented to the electorate prior to his re-election in May 2021. Engagement with the public had informed development of the Plan; the results of public consultations undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Warwickshire Police, and others had been analysed to provide an evidence base.

The Commissioner advised that five priorities were set out within the Plan. A summary had been provided under each priority indicating areas of focus and key performance indicators. These measures would support the 'holding to account' of Warwickshire Police and other partners.

The Commissioner reported that an outline had been included demonstrating how the Plan would work in combination with other national and local priorities, including the Strategic Policing Requirement, and Policing Vision 2025.

The Commissioner stated that the Plan included a commitment to equality and diversity. He advised that, at present, police officer numbers did not fully reflect County demographics. However, collectively, the workforce of Warwickshire Police was representative of the diversity of communities living and working in Warwickshire.

The Commissioner stated that the Plan included measures to track delivery of priorities by Warwickshire Police, including key questions to gauge overall success; National Crime and Policing Measures; and details of regular meetings held with the Chief Constable and others.

The Commissioner reported that a balanced budget had been prepared in support of the Plan. Reserve funding had been set at a level that provided adequate security to cover unforeseen circumstances. The Panel would explore this area in more detail at its meeting in January 2022.

The Chair thanked the Commissioner for a comprehensive draft Plan which took account of the Panel's observations over recent meetings. He supported the inclusion of the 'what success will look like' criteria.

Andrew Davies stated that it was a well-structured Plan. He sought clarification of the survey results referred to on page 7 of the document, stating that 50% of participants had provided an equivocal response to the question posed.

Neil Tipton (Head of Media and Communications, OPCC) advised that a professional market research company had been commissioned to undertake the survey, ensuring that it would reach a representative sample of residents, geographically and demographically.

In respect of the results of the survey, the Commissioner stated that 78% of participants had either provided strong agreement to having confidence in Warwickshire Police, or 'tended to agree' that they had confidence. This was an encouraging response, though he would continue to strive for improvement in this area. He accepted Andrew Davies' observation that 'tending to agree' was not an affirmative position; however, the survey response compared favourably with similar consultations undertaken elsewhere.

The Chair noted that 50% of participants had indicated a strong level of confidence in Warwickshire Police, adding that the Panel was pleased that the Commissioner had set a strategic priority to address shortages in levels of public confidence.

Councillor Golby highlighted the commitment within the Plan to "ensure that misogyny has no place within the police, criminal justice agencies or wider society as a whole." She sought clarification, including how the Commissioner proposed to address this issue.

The Commissioner stated that misogyny was a societal problem, and like any organisation, the Police Force was reflective of broader trends. He underlined the importance of ensuring fairness in the workplace, stating that measures such as an effective whistleblowing scheme would help to address the issue.

Chief Constable Debbie Tedds underlined the importance of including a commitment to address misogyny within the Plan. This would support holding to account of measures to safeguard standards of conduct within the Force. She stated that high standards were in place; however, it was vital to maintain vigilance.

Andy Davis stated that it was promising that the Plan included criteria to measure success within the five priority areas. However, improved clarity would support longer-term scrutiny of

the effectiveness of the Plan. He stated that the Planning and Performance Working Group had responsibility to monitor delivery of the Plan. As Chair of the Working Group, he suggested that scrutiny would be supported by development of a common understanding of performance indicators with input from the OPCC.

In support of this objective, Andy Davis moved that:

The Panel establishes a task and finish group to assist the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in developing a Performance Framework which will be informed by a RAG (Red, Amber, and Green) assessment of the current Plan as it reaches the end of its lifespan and an analysis to shape relevant targets and measures against the proposed measures of success within the new Plan, ensuring that these are relevant, and an outcome of work undertaken by the Commissioner. The findings of the task and finish group will be reported to the Panel at the meeting on 27 January 2022.

The Chair was supportive of the motion, stating that it provided a means to examine strategic priorities to develop a detailed delivery plan with a focus on areas of priority. The Commissioner's view was sought.

The Commissioner emphasised that it was his responsibility to hold Warwickshire Police to account. However, he supported the initiative, commenting that it could help to generate new ideas and provide improved scope for critical challenge by the Panel. He offered the support of his Office to develop proposals.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Poole. A vote was held, and the motion was unanimously supported.

In response to Councillor Kettle, the Commissioner advised that the Evolve Programme was on track. He was confident that the new ICT system would be delivered on schedule and operational from March 2022.

Councillor Davison stated that it was a well-formed Plan with positive aspirations. However, a developed strategy to address the climate emergency was required, setting out how carbon reduction could be achieved across different areas of policing. A timescale for completion of this work was also required.

The Commissioner advised that detailed work was on-going in this area, including an Estates Review to report before Christmas 2021. The Force would examine scope to install solar panels, insulate buildings, and replace inefficient boilers. Attention would be given to the sustainability of fleet vehicles. He stated that an assessment of baseline emissions was required before detailed targets could be established.

In response to Councillor Davison, the Commissioner advised that his commitment to "support the formulation of a new county wide strategy to co-ordinate activity across all relevant agencies" to address violence against women and girls, was enabled by means of a Warwickshire Board which examined this issue in detail. The Board encompassed Warwickshire Police, WCC, local partners and other agencies; he would take a proactive role in development of a strategy.

Polly Reed (Chief Executive, OPCC) advised that a timeline for the strategy was being developed, a working group had been convened and an update would be provided to the Panel in the next few months.

In response to Councillor Golby, the Commissioner advised that he chaired the Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership which brought together representatives of the Police, Highway Authority, National Highways, and others. The approach taken by Partnership had proved to be effective. He stated that road safety was main priority.

In response to Councillor Golby, the Commissioner advised that the Warwickshire Blue Light Collaboration Joint Advisory Board enabled a focus on mental health matters, including a triage scheme which allowed mental health professionals to work with emergency services to provide support where necessary. A similar initiative provided a means for mental health nurses to provide specialist support within custody suites. He stated that borough and district councils had made good progress to address homelessness; a new facility would soon open in Stratford-upon-Avon. He would seek to ensure that homelessness was properly supported by all partners.

It was resolved that the Panel would formally set out its observations on the draft Police and Crime Plan in a letter to the Commissioner.

(2) Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Update

The Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the report, emphasising the seriousness of the issue and the significant impact that unauthorised encampments had on communities. He reported that the introduction of the Warwickshire Unauthorised Encampments Protocol had led to an improved coordinated response from agencies, allowing problems to be resolved more easily.

The Commissioner stated that although rarely used, the stopover site located at Oldbury Road, Hartshill was an asset; officers could point to this resource to expedite a resolution in cases of unauthorised encampment.

Chris Lewis (Development and Policy Lead, OPCC) reported that, if passed, the proposed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 would lead to significant changes in statute. He outlined the operational implications of the proposed legislative changes, stating that there was an awareness that the criminalisation of trespass could lead to demands on the police that could not easily be met. New powers conferred by the Act could only be deployed within a framework of proportionality, legality, and absolute necessity.

Chris Lewis stated that unauthorised encampments presented challenging circumstances for communities and law enforcement. He advised that public attention often turned to the police to resolve difficulties. However, a partnership response was required. By statute, the local authority held responsibility to facilitate a resolution. He emphasised the importance of enabling a dialogue with traveller communities providing scope for temporary and negotiated stopping. He added that traveller communities were long-established with distinct cultures and attitudes.

In response to the Chair, the Commissioner advised that Martin Rone-Clarke was employed

by Warwickshire Police (as Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer) and had contributed to the National Police Chiefs Council GRT Working Group as a nationally recognised specialist in his field.

Councillor Golby highlighted the impact that unauthorised encampments had on communities, stating that interventions were often ineffective. She queried how the needs of communities could be met.

Chris Lewis recognised that this was an emotive issue which needed to be handled sensitively for an effective resolution to be reached. An evidence-based approach was required which took account of the needs of all parties. This was exemplified by the work undertaken by Martin Rone-Clarke.

The Chair highlighted the complexity of the issue and the need for agencies to work in partnership to identify solutions.

Councillor Holland stated that residents had been subjected to considerable distress because of unauthorised encampments. They had expressed valid and reasonable concerns. However, the rights of traveller communities could not be ignored. He highlighted that there were traveller communities that did not cause any disruption. Partnership across agencies was required for an effective response.

In response to the Chair, the Commissioner agreed to provide an update to the Panel once the terms of the new legislation had been established.

(3) Performance Accountability Meeting (PAM) Report (26 October 2021)

Councillor Ian Davison sought clarification of the Commissioner's response to the relatively low Action Taken rates for Domestic Violence including high levels of Outcome 16. Additionally, he highlighted reference in the Report to the September 2021 figures for 'Action Taken' outcomes for total recorded crime. This was at 9%.

The Commissioner stated that detailed examination of these statistics was required; reported crime figures included instances where allegations had been made, requiring investigation. He added that crimes committed by a single perpetrator were recorded individually; for example, 39 instances of domestic violence had been reported by one person, this did not equate to 39 perpetrators.

Chief Constable Debbie Tedds advised that in cases of domestic abuse, it was important to encourage victims to contact the Police. Often, victims of domestic abuse were subjected to coercive control, violence, and sexual violence. It was necessary to remove obstacles to allow victims to feel confident to report their experiences. She stated that the Pandemic had presented some challenges due to delays in criminal justice processes. She observed that victims often reported domestic abuse at a point of crisis and later resolved not to support police action. Providing care and support for victims of domestic abuse was key to improving outcomes.

In response to the Chair, Dave Patterson (Development and Policy Lead, OPCC) stated that the Report had been provided to the Panel to evidence the Commissioner's 'holding to

account' meetings with the Chief Constable. He provided assurance that action was being taken on the remaining 91% of instances of total recorded crime in September 2021.

In response to Andy Davis, the Commissioner advised that performance figures for the 101 Service varied considerably from week to week. Response times and call abandonment rates had been affected by staff availability during the Pandemic.

The Chief Constable commented that there was a need to view 101 call abandonment rates in the context of pressure on the 999 service; where there is a delay in answering a 101 call, callers will often hang up and dial 999.

3. Police & Crime Panel Annual Report 2020-21

The Chair drew attention to the updated draft Annual Report which included an additional paragraph relating to performance framework measures.

The Chair suggested that this paragraph be updated to include details of the Panel's resolution to establish a Task and Finish Group to examine performance monitoring in more detail. Members agreed to grant delegated authority to the Chair and Chair of the Planning and Performance Working Group to approve the final draft of the Annual Report once the amendment had been made.

4. Report of the Working Groups

Councillor Kettle provided an update of monitoring undertaken by the Budget Working Group. He praised the contribution of Sara Ansell, Treasurer at the OPCC, for the clarity and quality of the information she provided to the Group.

Andy Davis provided an update of the recent meeting of the Planning and Performance Working Group. He praised the quality of the Domestic Abuse briefing delivered by the OPCC; a request had been made for a briefing note to be provided to the wider Panel. The OPCC's report on Serious and Organised Crime would also be circulated to Panel members. He stated that the Group would take a close interest in transition arrangements for the new ICT system and would continue to give specific attention to the four principal areas of rape, domestic abuse, 101 communications, and total crime outcomes.

5. Work Programme

The Work Programme was noted.

In response to Councillor Poole, the Commissioner advised that he intended to appoint a deputy police and crime commissioner following setting of the budget. He stated that this was not a statutory requirement; however, a mandatory requirement for deputy PCCs was being considered as part of the Home Office Review of Police and Crime Commissioners.

6. Dates of Meetings

Future meeting dates were noted. The Chair stated that the meeting on 27 January 2021, to be held at Stratford-on-Avon District Council, would be promoted to encourage engagement of district councillors.

7. Any Urgent Items

There were none.

8. 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 paragraphs 3 and 7 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. Chief Constable's Annual Address

The Panel received a confidential briefing.

10. Exempt Minutes

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021 were confirmed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

11. Complaints

There were none.

The meeting rose at 16:52

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Chair