

Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

Thursday 7 April 2022

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 Jenny Fradgley (Warwickshire County Council)
Councillor Christopher Kettle (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
Councillor Sue Markham (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council)
Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher (Warwickshire County Council)
Councillor Derek Poole (Vice Chair) (Rugby Borough Council)
Councillor Adrian Warwick (Warwickshire County Council)

Officers

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

Others Present

John Anderson, Chair of Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee
Richard Long, Head of Policy and Partnership, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Dave Patterson, Assurance and Scrutiny Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Polly Reed, Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Philip Seccombe, Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner
Councillor Bryn Turner, Beaudesert & Henley in Arden Joint Parish Council

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Clare Golby and Councillor Dave Humphreys.
Councillor Sue Markham and Councillor Adrian Warwick were present as substitutes.
Apologies were also received from Councillor John Holland.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

(3) Minutes of the previous meeting

Polly Reed (Chief Executive, OPCC) requested an amendment to the minutes in respect of the third paragraph on page 7 of the agenda pack to clarify that it was collection fund surplus money “which accounted for part of the improved funding position” which constituted a one-off payment.

Polly Reed requested that the word “targeted” be removed from the final paragraph on page 7; and that the word “target” be removed from the sixth paragraph on page 8 of the agenda pack.

Subject to the amendments above, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

(4) Public Speaking

Councillor Bryn Turner of Beaudesert & Henley in Arden Joint Parish Council was welcomed to the meeting and invited to put his question to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Turner referred to the findings of the recently published Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) report into child sexual exploitation and organised networks. The report had concluded that “this investigation has revealed extensive failures by local authorities and police forces to keep pace with the pernicious and changing problem of sexual exploitation of children by networks.” He stated that an assessment of services in Warwickshire had formed part of the case study work for the report; where there were causes for concern, an effective response was required.

Councillor Turner asked that the Commissioner work with Warwickshire Police to implement a more proactive strategy to address sexual exploitation of children by organised networks, as exemplified by Avon & Somerset Police’s ‘Operation Topaz’.

The Commissioner thanked Councillor Turner for his observations and underlined the importance of enacting a robust strategy to counter child sexual exploitation (CSE). He highlighted that the case study work undertaken by IICSA had examined approaches to CSE by both Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Police. He stated that the report had also shown examples of good practice in Warwickshire.

The Commissioner stated that there was an opportunity to learn from good practice being undertaken elsewhere, such as in Avon and Somerset. It would be necessary to work closely with Social Services in Warwickshire. He highlighted the effectiveness of the Warwickshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which was focused on detecting and countering CSE.

Richard Long (Head of Policy and Partnership, OPCC) underlined the importance of enacting a robust strategy to address CSE. He stated that, at its core, CSE was a societal issue. To intervene effectively, a holistic, partnership approach was required across public sector organisations with an understanding of respective roles and responsibilities. He highlighted

the importance of the role of Warwickshire Police to identify and safeguard victims of CSE and bring perpetrators to justice.

Richard Long stated that the Commissioner and his Office welcomed the findings of the IICSA as well as the work of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) which sought to identify good practice and areas where improvements could be made. It was clear that improvements, locally and nationally, were required in the multi-agency response to CSE as outlined in the recent report. He advised that the Commissioner had a responsibility to hold the Chief Constable to account and had actively used this power with a focus specifically on issues relating to CSE. The Force accepted that more work was required, including problem profiling; recording and analysis of networks involved in perpetrating CSE; recording of disruption tactics, when used; and improvements to the operation of the risk assessment process.

Richard Long emphasised that the IICSE report had also focused on good practices within Warwickshire, including training aimed at eradicating victim blaming; a progressive approach to assessing risks; the adoption of the National Working Group CSE Assessment Tool; the 'Something's Not Right' multi-agency campaign; the multi-agency CSE Team; dedicated resources in place for victims of CSE, funded by the Commissioner; and a well-established audit and review process.

Richard Long emphasised that it was not accurate to conclude that Warwickshire Police had failed to take a proactive approach to CSE. However, it was clear that there was scope for improvements to be made. He stated that, throughout the period of the IICSE case study, the Commissioner had allocated additional funding to increase the capacity of Warwickshire Police to address CSE, including creation of dedicated child abuse trafficking and exploitation teams who would be a forefront of driving continuous improvement. He advised that the Commissioner also funded schemes to provide dedicated, long-term support for victims and survivors of CSE.

The Chair thanked Councillor Turner for raising the issue which would continue to be an area of interest to the Panel.

Councillor Turner stated that the Operation Topaz scheme had significantly increased rates of detection of CSE in Avon and Somerset. He urged the Commissioner to examine the strategy in detail.

The Commissioner emphasised his commitment to address CSE. The Force was focused on the issue; it was clear that there was more to be done. He highlighted the differences between Avon & Somerset and Warwickshire; however, he would examine the Operation Topaz strategy in detail.

2. Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) presented his report which provided an update on key activities since the Panel meeting in November 2021. The report included an overview of national issues, including initiatives emerging from the Home Office Police and Crime Commissioner Review, and the recently published State of Policing Report 2021.

The Commissioner provided an outline of the key priorities emerging from the recently introduced National Policing Measures, stating that the Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 enabled a focus on these areas. He provided an overview of the implications of the recent amendment to the Specified Information Order 2011 which placed a duty on PCCs to publish information on their contribution to achieving improvements against key priorities. He suggested that this could be a useful resource for the Panel and others.

The Commissioner reported that the Chief Constable had recently appointed a Deputy Chief Constable, Alex Franklin-Smith.

The Commissioner advised that the Evolve Programme was reaching its conclusion. The Programme had been established to support the transition of Warwickshire Police to a standalone Force following termination of the Strategic Alliance. He reported that Warwickshire Police had largely achieved this objective; a small number of legacy software applications would continue to be hosted by West Mercia Police until the end of June 2022.

The Commissioner reported that migration of Warwickshire Police's Operations Communication Centre from Leek Wootton to a refurbished facility at Stuart Ross House had been completed successfully without significant interruption to services. However, rates of COVID-19 had recently surged, affecting around 25% of control handlers. He reported that the upgraded facility had been well-received by staff; it would contribute to better contact with the public and improved outcomes. He invited the Panel to visit Stuart Ross House.

The Commissioner reported that the Evolve Programme would be succeeded by the 'Empower' Programme, with a focus on the three workstreams of People, Place, and Technology to drive continuous improvement. It would enable a means to deliver on the Force's 'Fit for the Future' Strategy and the ambitions of the Police and Crime Plan.

The Commissioner reported that plans were in place to achieve a Force establishment figure of 1100 officers before the end of the year. This would be supported by recruitment of 55 officers appointed through the national Uplift Programme.

The Commissioner announced that he had selected a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner; a confirmation hearing would be scheduled in April 2022 to enable the Panel to review the appointment.

The Commissioner reported a meeting had recently been held to finalise arrangements for the Grants Scheme. He advised that the allocation of funding towards small grants had been increased by £60,000 which would support initiatives across Warwickshire and contribute towards delivery of priorities outlined within the Police and Crime Plan. He advised that attention would be given to allocations to Commissioned Services, including contracts for larger organisations due for renewal in 2023.

In response to the Chair, the Commissioner expressed his support for the government's intention to grant greater powers of competence to PCCs; it would provide improved scope to achieve specific objectives, delivering wider benefits. The changes proposed by government constituted a 'levelling up' of PCCs' powers to ensure parity with the equivalent powers held by other public sector agencies.

In response to Councillor Kettle, the Commissioner advised that his report summarised the conclusions of Part Two of the Police and Crime Commissioner Review, including measures to ensure effective local scrutiny. He stated that it was likely that there were police and crime panels in England and Wales that did not enact scrutiny to the same standard as Warwickshire PCP. For example, not all PCPs supported working groups. It was likely that the government would seek to learn from best practice shown by panels nationally.

The Chair stated that consideration by the Panel of options to increase its capacity to better support scrutiny processes was ongoing. It was encouraging that the Home Office was considering approaches to provide additional support to police and crime panels.

In response to Andy Davis, the Commissioner advised that the Warwickshire Local Criminal Justice Board (WLCJB) brought together multiple agencies, including the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service, National Probation Service, Youth Justice Service, and others. It provided an informal setting for partnership working with the aim of improving local criminal justice outcomes. He stated that the PCC's role was to ask questions and 'hold to account' criminal justice agencies. The Review proposed to take steps to support a more data-confident culture, bolstering the abilities of PCCs to use this information confidently. The Commissioner stated that, as Chair of WLCJB, he was well-placed to seek information from different public bodies. He expressed confidence in the measures outlined by government; more information was anticipated in due course.

In response to Andrew Davies, the Commissioner stated that the changes proposed by government would expand the role of the PCC and were part of a broader drive to level-up across the public sector. He stated that the OPCC was a lean organisation; however, it would continue to prioritise efficient working and evaluate ongoing resourcing requirements should the changes proposed result in increased demand.

In response to Councillor Poole, the Commissioner stated that public confidence in policing was influenced by the performance of the 101 Service; however, it also depended upon perceptions of legitimacy. He stated that examples of poor conduct by the Metropolitan Police Service had a detrimental effect on public confidence in policing nationally. He advised that public confidence could be supported by organisational transparency, effective scrutiny by the Panel, engagement by elected members with residents, and escalation of concerns to Safer Neighbourhood Teams as well as his Office.

The Commissioner highlighted the challenges of transition to the new Police ICT system. Overall, the process had been completed with minimal disruption; however, it had impacted on call centre response times. He stated that performance of the 999 service had been good, but 101 performance required improvement. He drew attention to the high demand experienced by call handlers. Consideration would be given to increasing staff numbers; however, recruiting call handlers could be challenging and levels of staff turnover were high.

In response to Councillor Davison, the Commissioner advised that he regularly monitored 999 and 101 response times and would continue to hold the Force to account for its performance. He would continue to promote digital platforms such as 'Single Online Home' which enabled residents to report crimes online. He encouraged members to also promote this resource.

It was determined that the Planning and Performance Working Group would continue to focus on 101 response times, including analysis of the quality of call handling.

In response to Councillor Kettle, Polly Reed (Chief Executive, OPCC) advised that it had been resolved to retain two legacy applications hosted by West Mercia Police until June 2022 to enable a smoother transition to the new standalone Warwickshire ICT system. However, day-to-day policing was not dependent on these applications; the Force was now operationally independent of the West Mercia network.

In response to Andrew Davies, the Commissioner stated that the population of Warwickshire was growing. The Force would need to serve more residents who would expect an efficient service which provided value for money. He advised that the focus of the Empower Programme on People, Place and Technology would support a police presence across communities in Warwickshire; improved environmental sustainability; and better engagement, making use of the functionality of new ICT systems.

In response to Councillor Fradgley, the Commissioner advised that the Force was on-track to reach the target of 1100 police officers by December 2022. However, it was not possible to anticipate how many officers would leave and how many applications would be made to join the organisation.

Councillor Fradgley reported that, following advice from the Police, residents in Stratford-upon-Avon had collated evidence of specific antisocial behaviour. Meetings had been arranged to discuss the findings with a local police officer; however, each meeting had been cancelled at short notice due to operational pressures.

The Commissioner advised that such instances demonstrated the need for additional officers. He highlighted the operational pressures brought about by incidents such as the recent disruption at Kingsbury Oil Terminal. He asked Councillor Fradgley to supply details of the proposed meetings, enabling him to raise the issue with the Chief Constable.

In response to Councillor Davison, the Commissioner advised that there were approximately 80 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Warwickshire, many of whom aspired to become police officers, leading to vacancies. He stated that there was a need to prioritise retention of PCSOs. He would raise the query relating to the timing of recruitment arrangements with the Chief Constable.

In response to Councillor Kettle, the Commissioner advised that COVID-19 had affected deployments to the Rural Crime Team, leading to a temporary reduction in the number of allocated vehicles. He highlighted the continued effectiveness of the Rural Crime Team; it would be restored to full operational capacity as soon as practicable. He agreed to raise the issue with the Chief Constable.

The Chair highlighted the importance of the role performed by Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), stating that these bodies provided a means for effective joint working, problem solving and identification of vulnerabilities. The Commissioner underlined his support for CSPs and agreed to provide an update in his next report to the Panel.

3. Joint Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2021

Mr John Anderson (Chair of Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee) introduced the Joint Audit and Standards Committee (JASC) Annual Report 2021. He advised that the report set out the work of the Committee for the year ended 31 December 2021, including how the Committee has met its Terms of Reference and demonstrated compliance with the Home Office Financial Code of Practice and relevant Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance. The report provided the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable with a measure of assurance on the adequacy of governance arrangements.

John Anderson advised that the report outlined key areas of focus for 2022, enabling the JASC to discharge its responsibilities and oversee the ongoing effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. The Terms of Reference would be updated accordingly.

The report provided an outline of measures to monitor delivery of the Evolve Programme. John Anderson stated that the transition of services had been accomplished within a short timescale with a positive outcome. The JASC would continue to monitor the Empower Programme.

John Anderson advised that the CIPFA Financial Capability and Resilience report had awarded Warwickshire Police a rating of three stars, consistent with other forces. This was a commendable achievement as, at the time of the CIPFA report, a standalone Finance Department for Warwickshire Police had only recently been established.

John Anderson highlighted that, since writing the report, the external audit timetable had been revised to accommodate pressures on the External Auditor. It was a challenging time for the external audit sector, particularly in recruiting appropriately skilled personnel. He advised that external audit fees had increased by 20%; however, other police forces had experienced an increase of up to 80%.

In response to Councillor Davison, John Anderson advised that analysis of key strategic risks was supported by risk registers supplied by the Force and PCC. Strategic risk registers drew upon the Police and Crime Plan, providing an overview of measures proposed to mitigate risks.

In response to Councillor Kettle, John Anderson advised that JASC monitored recommendations emerging from CIPFA, the external auditor, internal audit processes and others. It sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the response of Warwickshire Police and the Commissioner. He advised that good progress had been made, as indicated by the clear report issued by the External Auditor, as well as a significant decrease in the number of outstanding recommendations from Internal Audit over the course of 2021.

The Chair thanked John Anderson, stating that alignment between the Panel and JASC supported ongoing effective scrutiny.

John Anderson stated that JASC attendance of Panel meetings had proved to be informative and insightful.

Resolved:

That the Police and Crime Panel notes the Joint Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2021.

4. Performance Framework (Police and Crime Plan 2021 - 2025) Task and Finish Group - Update Report

The Chair introduced the report which provided an update on the work of the Task and Finish Group. He thanked the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for their support of the Task and Finish Review, stating that high-quality resources had been provided. He advised that the findings of the Review would be utilised to inform the development of the Panel's Work Programme for 2022/23.

The Chair stated that the material considered by the Group demonstrated the complexity of the Panel's role to scrutinise effective and efficient delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

The Police and Crime Commissioner indicated his support for continued development of a Performance Dashboard to monitor delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. He emphasised that, as the role of PCC expanded, the Framework would need to adjust and adapt accordingly. For example, a greater emphasis on criminal justice outcomes would need to be accommodated within a flexible performance framework.

Councillor Davison highlighted that development of the initiative depended upon collaboration with the OPCC. He suggested that the Panel's resolution be revised to reflect this. He emphasised that the Performance Dashboard required flexibility; it may need to be refined over a longer period to arrive at the most effective means of representing performance.

Andy Davis, Chair of the Planning and Performance Working Group, expressed support for the revised resolution. He stated that the Working Group would seek to develop an approach that recognised the nuances of measuring performance, including the proposed national changes to the role of the PCC.

Polly Reed (Chief Executive, OPCC) stated that the Planning and Performance Working Group would provide an effective forum to develop proposals.

Andy Davis proposed that the Panel resolve "that the initiative to develop a Performance Dashboard for monitoring of delivery of the Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 25 be progressed by the Planning and Performance Working Group in collaboration with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner".

Councillor Kettle seconded the motion which was unanimously supported by those present.

Resolved:

That the Panel:

1. Notes the progress made by the Performance Framework (Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2025) Task and Finish Group.

2. Agrees that the initiative to develop a Performance Dashboard for monitoring of delivery of the Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 25 be progressed by the Planning and Performance Working Group in collaboration with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

5. Work Programme

The Chair highlighted the diversity of the Police and Crime Commissioner's oversight of policing and crime. To be most effective, the Panel had resolved to focus on six key areas in 2022/23:

- **Budget Setting, Public Engagement and Consultation** – the Chair thanked the Commissioner for his offer to engage with the Panel to support promotion of the public consultation for the 2023/24 budget and precept. He stated that there was an opportunity to consider issues affecting the tax base to ensure that proposals take account of latest information.
- **Needs Based Commissioning** – the Chair suggested that the Budget Working Group examine Needs Based Commissioning to develop an understanding of the effectiveness of funding allocations by the PCC. This would encompass joint commissioning with partners.
- **Performance Framework** – providing a means for the Planning and Performance Working Group to progress performance monitoring initiatives with a focus on effectiveness and efficiency as well as outcome rates. The Chair commented that this could help to inform prevention strategies such as interventions to address Child Sexual Exploitation.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** – to ensure that the organisational makeup is inclusive and fit for purpose.
- **Domestic Abuse and Domestic Violence** – to enable the Panel to take a detailed overview of strategies in place to respond to a complex area of crime. The Panel would seek to develop its understanding of partnership arrangements, ensuring that commissioned services contributed to improved circumstances for victims.
- **Areas of Community Concern** – to enable scope to consider issues consistently raised by residents that may require input by the Panel. For example, 20mph speed limits around schools.

The Commissioner stated that he was content with the Panel's proposals. However, he emphasised that the Panel was strategic in nature; it would not be appropriate to consider single local issues.

The Chair provided assurance that the Panel would not seek to raise specific single issues, instead it would focus on the objective of raising public confidence in policing by providing a means to consider the strategic implications of residents' concerns, taking an holistic view.

6. Review of 'On Tour' Arrangements

The Chair introduced this item, stating that the Panel had previously resolved to hold its meetings 'on the road' to encourage public participation and improved local engagement. The initiative had shown limited success. He suggested that the Panel continue to consider opportunities to make meetings publicly accessible whilst holding future meetings at Shire Hall, Warwick.

In response to the Chair, members expressed support for future meetings to be held in Shire Hall.

7. Dates of Meetings

Future meeting dates were noted.

8. Any Urgent Items

There were none.

9. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

As there were no complaints to consider, there was no requirement to enter confidential session.

10. Complaints

There were none.

The meeting rose at 15:56.

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Chair