

Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

Thursday 23 June 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Barbara Brown (Warwickshire County Council)
Mr Andrew Davies (Independent Member)
Councillor John Holland (Warwickshire County Council)
Councillor Dave Humphreys (Warwickshire County Council)
Councillor Ray Jarvis (North Warwickshire Borough Council)
Councillor Christopher Kettle (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
Councillor Martin Luckhurst (Warwick District Council)
Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher (Warwickshire County Council)
Councillor Derek Poole (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

Emma Daniell, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Gavin McArthur, Warwickshire Joint Audit and Standards Committee
Claire Morris, Head of Business Services and Assurance, OPCC
Dave Patterson, Assurance and Scrutiny Officer, OPCC
Polly Reed, Chief Executive, OPCC
Philip Seccombe, Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner

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

Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher nominated Councillor Christopher Kettle to serve as Chair for the coming year. Councillor Dave Humphreys seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and Councillor Kettle was elected unanimously as Chair to the Police and Crime Panel for 2022/23.

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

Councillor Derek Poole nominated Councillor Barbara Brown to serve as Vice-Chair for the coming year. The Chair seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and Councillor Barbara Brown was elected unanimously as Vice-Chair to the Police and Crime Panel for 2022/23.

3. General

The Chair welcomed the new representative of North Warwickshire Borough Council, Councillor Ray Jarvis, to the Panel.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chair praised the contribution made by Councillor David Reilly, stating that he had chaired the Panel with knowledge, dedication, and leadership.

The Chair thanked Councillor Derek Poole for his longstanding service as Vice Chair to the Panel.

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Ian Davison. Councillor Martin Luckhurst was present as a substitute.

Apologies were also received from Mr Andy Davis, Councillor Jenny Fradgley, and Councillor Clare Golby.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

(3) Minutes of the Previous Meetings

It was resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 7 April 2022 and 25 April 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

(4) Public Speaking

There was none.

4. Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) introduced his report which provided an update on key activities since the Panel meeting on 7 April 2022.

In response to Councillor Humphreys, the Commissioner advised that he chaired the Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership which was focused on achieving a reduction by 50% of the number of incidents of death and serious injury on Warwickshire roads by 2030. He advised that there had been significant investment in this area by the two principal partners, Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Police. It was proposed to install more speed cameras, these would be deployed at sites where there had been a higher number of killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties. He advised that an action plan had been developed to achieve road safety targets. This included a grant scheme, enabling local communities to access funding for highway safety initiatives.

In response to the Chair, the Commissioner advised that KSI figures had been influenced by the effect of COVID-19 lockdowns. As road usage returned to pre-pandemic levels, it would be possible to evaluate the success of the initiatives in place to improve road safety.

The Chair commented that it would be helpful for the Panel to be able to contrast KSI figures of recent years with those of the pre-pandemic period. He suggested that, in future, KSI data be supplied over a longer period to allow the Panel to take account of the effect of the Pandemic on highway safety.

The Commissioner emphasised that road safety depended upon partnership working between the Force, County Council, National Highways, and others. A balanced assessment of the effectiveness of interventions required an awareness of the collaborative nature of work in this area. He agreed to provide data that enabled a comparison to be made with KSI figures that predated the Pandemic.

In response to Andrew Davies, the Commissioner acknowledged that the rate of 101 call abandonment had been high in recent months. He advised that in some instances, callers were disinclined to wait for a response within three to four minutes during busy periods. Performance figures had been influenced by callers choosing to redial, rather than wait. He advised that the Single Online Home service provided an alternative means to report crimes. Take up of this service had increased, reducing the pressure on call handlers. He advised that the Operations Communication Centre experienced periods of intensive demand. Efforts had been made to modify shift patterns to provide improved cover when required.

The Commissioner stated that, at present, the Operations Communication Centre was understaffed due to challenges affecting recruitment across public sector organisations. However, good progress had been made to increase staffing levels. He reported that the Chief Constable would review the arrangement whereby call handlers were responsible for both 999 and 101 calls. In these instances, 999 calls took priority. By assigning sole responsibility for 999 calls to specific personnel, better provision could be made for the 101 service.

Dave Patterson (Assurance and Scrutiny Officer, OPCC) advised that 101 calls were often complex in nature, leading to delays. He advised that the Commissioner had taken steps to hold the Force to account for performance in this area. He stated that 101 call abandonment was an issue affecting police forces nationally due to rising demand for the 999 service. It was proposed to examine the issue in detail with the prospect of additional resources and training.

In response to Andrew Davies, the Commissioner advised that the budget setting process was predicated on assumptions in specific areas, such as fuel and energy costs. In January 2022, it had been possible to make sound assumptions based on an assessment of known costs pressures in the year ahead. However, it was not possible to foresee all cost pressures. Reserves had been set aside for this reason. He expressed confidence that a balanced budget had been set which allowed for increases in pay. The effectiveness of the budget could not be gauged until later in the year. He expressed confidence that it would be possible to achieve officer recruitment targets, deliver improvements to the police estate, and capitalise on the advantages of investment in ICT, despite the prevailing economic headwinds.

The Commissioner advised that the Budget Working Group would be regularly updated on delivery of the budget, including any mitigations to offset increased costs.

In response to the Chair, The Commissioner advised that following successful delivery of the Evolve Programme, the Chief Constable would seek to shape Warwickshire Police as a standalone Force by means of the Empower Programme. This was an entirely operational

consideration; however, he was supportive of the Chief Constable's objectives. A focus on local policing would be enabled by decentralisation of the Force into three separate commands for the north, south, and east of the County. A Chief Inspector would be instated at each command with responsibility for engagement with communities. He advised that the structures in place would lead to improved accountability with benefits for Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT). It would be cost neutral and aligned with the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan. This was a long-term project; the Panel would be regularly updated.

In response to the Chair, The Commissioner advised that implementation of the Empower Programme would be monitored with reference to the key priorities of the Police and Crime Plan. He would not seek to alter the structures outlined by the Chief Constable. However, reporting systems would be in place to determine the effectiveness of the Empower Programme to reduce crime and prevent reoffending.

Councillor Poole stated that there had been significant investment to modernise custody facilities at Rugby Police Station. However, under the current arrangement, officers were required to transport those in custody to Nuneaton.

The Commissioner advised that he had raised this subject with the Chief Constable. He acknowledged Councillor Poole's concerns. However, it was considered that the cost of updating the Custody Suite in Rugby to modern standards was prohibitively expensive. Additionally, operating costs would exceed the expense of transport to Nuneaton. He emphasised that this was an operational decision; however, he would not wish to see a reduction in the number of custody suites in Warwickshire.

In response to Councillor Humphreys, the Commissioner advised that the allocation of resources to SNTs was unchanged. However, there were challenges associated with recruitment and retention of staff, leading to vacancies. He highlighted his commitment to serving rural locations which had led to creation of a Patrol Base at Coleshill. He highlighted the operational demands that required reposting of officers to support incidents elsewhere, such as policing of the protests at Kingsbury Oil Terminal. He would continue to hold the Force to account to ensure that SNTs would be fully staffed as soon as possible.

In response to Councillor Jarvis, the Commissioner acknowledged that staffing of SNTs was an important priority. He highlighted the role of SNTs to engage with communities, address social problems, and provide visible policing. However, he emphasised that Warwickshire was well supported by other officers who could respond to emergencies across rural and urban locations. He stated that SNTs were properly funded; it would be necessary to attract capable personnel to the current vacancies.

In response to the Chair, the Commissioner acknowledged the value that experienced officers brought to the Force. However, he emphasised the importance of recruitment to progress the ambition to achieve a Force establishment of 1100 officers during 2022/23. In recent years, the average age and level of experience of officers had significantly decreased. This was an unavoidable consequence of expanding the Force.

Dave Patterson advised that there could be scope to provide the Panel with details of the level of experience across Warwickshire Police. To do so, it would be necessary to take account of how

officers were deployed. For example, to support their development, a high proportion of new starters were deployed as patrol officers.

In response to the Chair, the Commissioner advised that most officers chose to retire after serving for a period of 30 years. These accounted for the highest proportion of leavers. He stated that very few officers elected to transfer to other police forces; however, Warwickshire Police attracted a good number of transferees from elsewhere. He emphasised that the alternative to recruiting younger, less experienced officers was to revert to a Force establishment of approximately 800. This was not a viable proposition.

There was discussion of how data showing the proportion and deployment of experienced officers could be presented. The Commissioner asked that a written request be made to clarify the Panel's expectations.

5. Annual Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner 2021/22

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) introduced his Annual Report, stating that this was a wide-ranging, high-level document which provided a summary of the work undertaken during 2021/22.

In response to the Chair, the Commissioner emphasised the importance of acting promptly to make use of external funding opportunities. In 2021/22, this had enabled improved support for victims of sexual and domestic violence, and delivery of projects to address violence against women and girls.

Polly Reed (Chief Executive, OPCC) advised that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) had demonstrated a proactive approach to accessing external funding, which had seen an increase in recent years. Allocation of funding was often proportionate to the size of the policing area. However, there was no evidence to suggest that Warwickshire was disadvantaged by the terms of grant schemes.

In response to the Chair, the Commissioner advised that it had been determined to restructure the OPCC in response to increased and rising demand, including administering of appeals, as well as an expansion of the criminal justice element of the PCC's role.

Polly Reed advised that PCCs were provided with an option to appoint a deputy. The Commissioner had chosen to make use of this opportunity. She advised that a review of the OPCC's statutory function had identified areas where structural changes would better support delivery of objectives. She advised that roles and responsibilities had been reassigned across existing posts within the staffing structure. The staff headcount had increased by one part-time position, the recently appointed Communications and Engagement Officer.

The Chair drew attention to the table within Section 9.1 of the Report outlining budget, outturn, and variance figures for 2021/22. He queried the figure quoted for gross expenditure: the outturn amount was £124.301m but the budget figure was £119.378m. This constituted a difference of approximately £3m. He suggested that the figures quoted for Supplies and Services contributed to the anomalous variance. He requested that the table be reviewed, that the Panel be provided with updated figures, and that the commentary within the Report be amended, if required.

Polly Reed advised that this was a typographical error. The £14.854m outturn amount for Supplies and Services was inaccurate and would be corrected. A revised table would be provided.

6. Appointment of Working Groups

The Chair introduced the report which outlined arrangements for the Panel's two Working Groups – the Budget Working Group and the Planning & Performance Working Group. The Panel was asked to confirm the continuation of the two groups, the terms of reference for each group, and the membership for the 2022/23 municipal year.

In response to the Chair, members expressed confidence that the working groups made a meaningful contribution to the work of the wider Panel and added value.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) stated that he was content to continue to provide officer support to the two working groups. However, he underlined the time commitment that this entailed. He asked that the working groups take a proportionate approach to enquiries to the OPCC, recognising the demands on officers' time.

Polly Reed (Chief Executive, OPCC) requested that an amendment be made under the 'Indicators of Success' on the terms of reference for each working group. Rather than "that the PCC acts on recommendations put forward by the Police and Crime Panel", she asked that the terms of reference state "that the PCC considers recommendations put forward by the Police and Crime Panel". This would be better aligned with statutory guidance.

Polly Reed requested that the 'Key Officers / Departments' section of the Terms of Reference for the Planning & Performance Working Group be determined following clarification of arrangements for specific OPCC officer support.

The Chair agreed that officer support for the Planning & Performance Working Group be determined following the meeting. He expressed willingness for the 'Indicators of Success' criteria to be revised. However, he stated that, should a working group raise an issue of fundamental concern, it would be important to be assured that action would be taken by the Commissioner.

Following discussion, the Chair suggested that under 'Indicators of Success', the terms of reference for the working groups be amended to "that the PCC reviews and responds to recommendations put forward by the Police and Crime Panel". This was supported by the Panel and Commissioner.

Resolved:

1. The Panel confirmed the continuation of the Budget Working Group and the Planning & Performance Working Group.
2. The Panel confirmed the terms of reference of the two working groups subject to revisions being made under 'Indicators of Success' for both groups, "that the PCC reviews and responds to recommendations put forward by the Police and Crime Panel" and finalisation of arrangements for specific officer support by the OPCC.

3. That the appointments to the Working Groups be as follows:
 - a. Budget Working Group: Councillors Jenny Fradgley (subject to confirmation), John Holland, Ray Jarvis, and Christopher Kettle.
 - b. Planning & Performance Working Group: Mr Andy Davis, Mr Andrew Davies, Councillors Barbara Brown, Clare Golby, Dave Humphreys, and Derek Poole.
4. That Councillor Christopher Kettle be appointed Chair of the Budget Working Group and that Mr Andy Davis be appointed Chair of the Planning & Performance Working Group.

7. Annual Report of the Police and Crime Panel 2021/22

The Chair introduced the Annual Report which provided a summary of the Panel's activities and achievements during 2021/22 and priorities for the municipal year ahead.

Councillor Poole moved that the Panel endorse the Annual Report. He praised the contribution made by Councillor David Reilly as Chair.

The Chair seconded the motion which was unanimously supported by members.

The Chair sought members' agreement that a letter be sent to Councillor David Reilly expressing the Panel's gratitude and esteem. This was agreed.

Resolved:

That the Panel endorses the Annual Report for 2021/22.

8. Areas of Community Concern

The Chair introduced this item which followed the Panel's resolution in April 2022 to introduce a means to evaluate the strategic implications of any residents' concerns reported to councillors.

In response to the Chair, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) advised that deployment of officers to the Rural Crime Team was an operational consideration. There were vacancies; however, funding for the agreed allocation of officers was in place. He would raise the issue with the Chief Constable.

The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) stated that the Rural Crime Team was a considerable asset. Efforts were being made by the Chief Constable to fill vacancies. However, it was a specialised area of policing. She advised that as newly trained officers developed in knowledge and experience, there would be improved scope for deployment to the Rural Crime Team.

The Commissioner advised that figures recently published by a national newspaper provided a misleading account of police performance in response to burglaries. He advised that the data used included offences where there had been thefts and attempted thefts from garages, sheds, and commercial buildings. In Warwickshire, priority was allocated to 'home invasions' which had the

worst impact on victims. Recent quarterly data showed that Warwickshire Police was the best performing Force nationally for burglary reduction.

The Chair suggested that a focus on trends, drawing on statistical analysis, would help to inform an improved understanding of the response of Warwickshire Police to burglary, both domestic and non-domestic; conviction rates; and approaches to reduce offending. It was agreed to allocate this work to the Planning & Performance Working Group.

The Commissioner queried whether 'Areas of Community Concern' as a regular agenda item was sufficiently defined. He stated that specific local issues could be resolved outside of Panel meetings, enabling a focus on strategic matters.

The Chair suggested that consideration be given to examining the strategic implications of residents' concerns with the prospect of engaging with Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) to support resolution of local issues. Where there were countywide implications, matters could be escalated to the Panel.

It was resolved that the Panel would contact the four CSPs to provide a means for any community concerns which had high-level, strategic implications to be raised at Panel meetings. The agenda item would be renamed 'Issues Raised by Community Safety Partnerships'.

9. Work Programme

The Chair sought agreement for the Planning & Performance Working Group to be allocated responsibility for analysis of trends associated with the resolution of burglary. It was agreed that this be added to the Work Programme.

10. Dates of Meetings

Future Meeting dates were noted.

11. Any Urgent Items

There were none.

12. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

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

13. Complaints

There were none.

The meeting rose at 15.54.

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Chair