

Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

Annual Report 2022/23



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

Nuneaton
&
Bedworth



Chair's Foreword



Councillor Christopher Kettle

Chair of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel 2022/23

The 2022/23 municipal year has been an eventful period for policing both nationally and across Warwickshire. In particular this year saw unexpected demands on the police resource from the sad death of our sovereign, Queen Elizabeth to new national protest campaigns, some of which took place in and impacted on the County. These demands were against a background of an inflation rate unprecedented in recent times.

The challenges of policing continue to rise and the availability of sufficient funding, a significant proportion of which is raised from Council taxpayers, continues to be one of those challenges.

The Police and Crime Panel has sought to engage positively with the Police and Crime Commissioner offering a balance of support and constructive challenge and acting as a critical friend of the Police and Crime Commissioner whilst scrutinising decisions and actions taken by the PCC so representing and amplifying the voices of Warwickshire residents.

I would like to thank the Commissioner, his Office, and the Chief Constable for their support in this work over this last year.

It has been a year which has seen the conclusion of Warwickshire Police's 'Evolve' programme along with the final stages of the exit from the joint working with West Mercia Police and the introduction of a new operating model for the Force under the new 'Empower' programme.

The Panel has followed closely Warwickshire Police's progress during the year and has sought assurances from the Commissioner across a range of topics encompassing public confidence in policing, financial sustainability, recruitment, vetting, performance of the 101 Service, and much more.

The Panel has focused on levels of experience within the Force, recognising that, following the rapid expansion of Warwickshire Police numbers, the proportion of inexperienced officers has inevitably increased. The Panel has taken a close interest in measures to mitigate that inevitable dilution of experience to ensure the Force continues to deliver an effective service.

The Panel shares the widespread expressions of outrage and concern following reports of misconduct across police forces nationally and recent criminal cases involving Metropolitan Police officers. The importance of safeguarding standards of professional conduct in policing is recognised by both the Panel and Commissioner. It will continue to be a key area of focus.

In October 2022, the Panel examined the report of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following its most recent Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspection of Warwickshire Police. The findings of HMICFRS provide an objective, independent assessment of the shape of the Force and the Panel has explored the implications of the report with the Commissioner in detail. The issues flagged by the Inspectorate will continue to guide the Panel's scrutiny in the year ahead.

In February 2023, the Panel accepted the Commissioner's proposed increase of £14.00 (5.3%) in the local policing precept for an average Band D property (and equivalent percentage increase for other bands). In doing so, the Panel recognised the difficult choices presented by current economic circumstances, including the effects of rising inflation, escalating energy prices, and pressure on household finances. The Panel also noted the impact of economic pressures on police finances, including the need to ensure fair wage increases for those working for Warwickshire Police to contend with the cost of living.

In its response, the Panel recommended that operational and financial progress to achieve the specific improvements and efficiencies outlined within the Budget be closely monitored over the coming year.

It has been a pleasure to serve as Chair of the Panel and my thanks go to colleagues both past and present for their hard work and dedication. Over the past year, the Panel has delivered a high standard of scrutiny and support, and I am confident that it will continue to do so in the year to come.



Councillor Christopher Kettle
Chair of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel 2022/23

Summary of Key Activities and Achievements

In 2022/23, the Police and Crime Panel has performed its role as the Police and Crime Commissioner's 'critical friend' over five meetings held in public; scrutinising the Commissioner on the delivery of his vision for policing in Warwickshire, including the key priorities of the Police and Crime Plan 2021–25 to:

- Fight crime and reduce reoffending
- Deliver visible and effective policing
- Keep people safe and reduce harm
- Strengthen communities
- Deliver better justice for all

Minutes, agendas, and reports can be found on the [Warwickshire County Council website](#). Meetings of the Panel are live-streamed, and footage is available for a period of 12 months after each meeting. Recordings can be viewed on the website under individual meeting dates.

Scrutiny of the Proposed Budget and Policing Precept for 2023/24

The Police and Crime Panel has a statutory duty to review the Commissioner's budget and can veto the budget if it decides that the proposed increase in the policing element of the council tax (known as the 'precept') is either too high or too low.

On 6 February 2023, the Commissioner presented his proposed budget for Warwickshire Police, including a proposed increase of £14.00 (5.3%) in the local policing precept for an average Band D property (and equivalent percentage increase for other bands) for the 2023/24 financial year. In his presentation to the Panel, the Commissioner outlined the anticipated benefits of his budget including increased numbers of police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), better visibility of neighbourhood policing, and investment in customer services and call-handling processes. He recognised that many households had been impacted by cost-of-living pressures, and that any increase in the precept presented challenges. However, he emphasised that policing had also been impacted by current economic circumstances, including rising costs for fuel, energy, and goods and services.

The Commissioner advised that, whilst there had been a welcomed increase in central government funding for 2023/24, this alone would not provide the level of funding required to protect services. For this reason, efficiency savings of approximately £1m would be sought. These savings could be achieved by optimising recent investment in ICT systems without putting jobs at risk. He advised that

unavoidable cost pressures meant that, even to stand still, an increased budget was required. This left little alternative other than to increase the precept. However, it would be necessary to demonstrate that every penny provided by residents delivered a tangible improvement to police services.

After detailed scrutiny, the Panel resolved to support the Commissioner's proposed budget. In doing so, members recognised the difficult choices presented by current economic circumstances including the effects of rising inflation, escalating energy prices, and pressure on household finances. The Panel also noted the impact of economic pressures on police finances, including the need to ensure fair wage increases for those working for Warwickshire Police to contend with the cost of living.

The Panel noted the proposed improvements to police services within the Commissioner's budget. Whilst supporting the proposed precept, the Panel recommended that progress to achieve the specific improvements and efficiencies be closely monitored over the coming year. The Commissioner's offer to provide regular updates to the Panel throughout the year ahead was gratefully received.

Public Engagement and Consultation

Each year, the Police and Crime Commissioner is required by legislation to consult the public on his proposals for setting the budget for policing locally. Consultation must occur prior to any decisions being made on future budgets to ensure that the Commissioner has taken public feedback into consideration before proposing a final draft budget.

When reviewing the Precept for 2022/23, the Panel recommended that attention be given to measures to encourage wider participation in the public consultation. A phased approach was suggested, enabling a view to be sought from residents in advance of details of the government settlement being made available. To support this initiative, in August 2022 the Panel held a meeting with the Commissioner's Head of Business Services and Assurance, and Head of Media and Communication to review proposals for the budget consultation, including the 'Your Police, Your Views' questionnaire.

The Panel's recommendations were incorporated into the questionnaire and the consultation was launched in September 2022. The longer timeframe and earlier start to the consultation meant that a greater number of responses were received compared to earlier years' surveys. This was informative to the budget setting process and helped to support the Panel's analysis of the proposed budget and precept for 2023/24.

Police Officer Recruitment

In July 2019, the Government announced plans to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers in England and Wales by the end of March 2023. The Home Office established the Police Uplift Programme to help police forces to achieve this. In Warwickshire, this equated to a target to reach a total force establishment of 1,100 officers by the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

Throughout the year, the Commissioner has provided regular updates of Warwickshire Police's progress to meet the uplift target. The Panel has sought assurances regarding the recruitment, retention, training, and vetting of new officers. Detailed consideration was also given to the implications of an increased proportion of less experienced officers. At its meeting in April 2023, the Panel welcomed the news that the Force had achieved, and exceeded, the targeted officer headcount within the prescribed timeframe.

The Panel has taken a close interest in training arrangements for new officers, including the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship Programme delivered by Warwickshire Police in partnership with Staffordshire University. The Panel has emphasised the importance of achieving a balance between academic work and practical experience for trainee officers. The Commissioner has expressed support for this approach whilst recognising the complexities of modern policing and the importance of training in the use of digital resources and technology.

The Panel has sought reassurance from the Commissioner that the arrangements in place for monitoring and mentoring of new officers are sustainable and do not place an undue burden on more experienced officers. Members also highlighted the importance of pastoral support for trainee officers, recognising the increased number of new starters. In response, the Commissioner advised that the training and wellbeing requirements of new recruits would be closely monitored, and that the provision of structured support by experienced officers was a priority recognised by the Chief Constable.

Empower Programme

Throughout the year, the Panel has received regular updates on the development of Warwickshire Police's Empower Programme, including delivery of a new operating model for the Force under the three strands of 'People', 'Place' and 'Technology'. Under Empower, a new geographically-based policing model has been introduced with command centres in the north, east, and south of the County each overseen by a Chief Inspector. Combined with the recent uplift in officer numbers, the geographic model is intended to support improved engagement with local communities and provide greater accountability for police performance.

The Panel was advised that under the new model, a dedicated Patrol Investigations Unit would be established at each command centre with responsibility for undertaking investigations into higher volume crimes. This would enable existing patrol teams to focus on responding to incidents, increasing the investigative capacity of the Force. Empower will also see the introduction of new Resolution Centres at the main police stations of Leamington Spa, Nuneaton, Rugby, and Stratford-upon-Avon with extended opening hours, seven days a week. In addition to the focus on local policing, Empower is intended to facilitate improvements to ICT systems and strengthen the Prevention and Protection capabilities of the Force.

Progress of the Empower Programme will be monitored by the Commissioner in the year ahead with reference to the key priorities of the Police and Crime Plan. The Panel will take a close interest in the effectiveness of the new operating model to deliver against its key objectives.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspection 2020/2021

PEEL Assessments are conducted by HMICFRS to measure the overall performance of police forces in England and Wales. Each inspection results in a grading from outstanding, good, adequate, requires improvement, or inadequate, across core police activities.

On 14 October 2022, HMICFRS published the [findings of its most recent inspection of Warwickshire Police](#). The Overall Summary showed that the performance of the Force was rated as 'adequate' across the categories of 'preventing crime', 'treatment of the public', 'protecting vulnerable people', 'developing a positive workplace', and 'good use of resources'. However, HMICFRS graded the categories of 'investigating crime', 'responding to the public', and 'managing offenders' as 'requires improvement'.

The Inspectorate reported that it was satisfied with several aspects of the performance of Warwickshire Police, including 'keeping people safe and reducing crime'. However, there were areas where improvements were required. The Assessment found that the Force needed to improve how it identifies victims' vulnerability at first point of contact and how it assesses calls from the public so that vulnerable people and repeat callers are routinely identified. HMICFRS highlighted the need for the Force to make sure that it carries out effective investigations, giving victims the required level of support.

The Inspectorate noted that it had been necessary for the Force to revise its infrastructure at the same time as making changes to its systems. During the period of the inspection, Warwickshire Police had transformed its approach to IT,

exemplified by the introduction of a new Operations Communication Centre. It was noted by HMICFRS that, at the time of the inspection, it had been too early to assess the benefits of these changes. The Inspectorate recognised the scale and pace of the transformation of Warwickshire Police, noting that the strategic plans in place by the Force gave cause for optimism.

In his report to the Panel, the Commissioner provided reassurance that the organisational restructuring of Warwickshire Police would provide a means to address many of the concerns raised by HMICFRS and improve the overall performance of the Force. He would ensure that the Chief Constable was adequately resourced to deliver an improved service through the recruitment of additional police officers and other investments to support frontline policing. HMICFRS had recognised that the Force made good use of its finances with plans that were both ambitious and sustainable.

In its analysis, the Panel examined the findings of the Inspectorate focusing on the Force's capacity to investigate crime, the increased proportion of less-experienced officers, and the performance of the 101 Service. Detailed consideration was given to the factors affecting 101 service delivery, including the requirement for Warwickshire Police to periodically accept a significant number of calls on behalf of neighbouring forces that were experiencing exceptionally high call demand or technical difficulties.

In his response to the Panel, the Commissioner stated that effective use of resources would be required to address the areas identified by the Inspectorate as requiring improvement. HMICFRS had recognised the challenges associated with establishing Warwickshire Police as a standalone force following the termination of the Strategic Alliance with West Mercia Police. He highlighted the anticipated benefits of the Empower Programme, including increased resources for investigating crime. There was good evidence of improvements being made; however, there was much to be done and he would continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to deliver the required changes.

Standards of Conduct in Policing

The Panel has a longstanding interest in measures to ensure that a strong organisational culture is present within Warwickshire Police. Nationally, there has been an increased focus on standards of conduct across police forces. Reports of incidents of racist, misogynistic, and homophobic behaviour within the Metropolitan Police Service have occurred with lamentable regularity in recent years, damaging public confidence in policing. The Panel strongly supports the Commissioner's commitment to ensure that such conduct has no place in Warwickshire Police and agrees that vigilance is required to safeguard standards of behaviour.

In November 2022, HMICFRS published its report, '[An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#)'. The report included an assessment of the ability of police forces to detect and respond to misogynistic and predatory behaviour by officers and staff. It identified five areas for improvement and made 43 recommendations to strengthen vetting processes in the police service. The Panel considered the report, and [the PCC's response](#), with interest. The Panel shares the Commissioner's view that robust measures are required to safeguard professional standards and reinforce public trust in policing.

Following the publication of the [Report of the Baroness Casey Review](#) in March 2023, the Panel sought an update from the Commissioner on work being undertaken to secure standards of policing conduct in Warwickshire. The Commissioner advised that the Chief Constable had instigated a programme of re-vetting across the organisation. To date, no serious concerns had emerged. The Professional Standards Department was primed to respond to any cases should they arise. Other activities would be undertaken across the Force to promote high standards of conduct, including a reinforced whistleblowing policy and training on police ethics and integrity. He reported that the measures proposed by the Chief Constable to respond to national concerns relating to standards in policing had been scrutinised and found to be sufficiently robust.

The Panel will continue to take a close interest in the Commissioner's oversight of vetting processes and measures to ensure that the highest standards of conduct are followed within Warwickshire Police. The Commissioner has agreed to provide an update to the Panel once the re-vetting process has been completed which will be received with interest.

Visit to Stuart Ross House, Warwick

The Panel was grateful to accept the Commissioner and Chief Constable's invitation to visit the recently refurbished Operations Communication Centre (OCC) at Stuart Ross House, Warwick. In January 2023, Panel members were given a tour of the facility to see the OCC in action and speak with officers and call-handlers. A presentation was also provided by the Force's Senior Leadership Team focusing on the Empower Programme. The opportunity to directly observe operational processes proved to be informative, providing improved context for discussion of the relevant issues affecting the delivery of police services.

Warwickshire Joint Audit & Standards Committee

Throughout the year, the Panel has continued to develop its relationship with Warwickshire Joint Audit & Standards Committee (JASC). The JASC provides independent advice and makes recommendations to both the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable on the adequacy and effectiveness of

governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; annual financial and governance reporting; treasury, capital, and reserves management; internal and external audit arrangements; health and safety; and adherence to appropriate policies, standards, and ethics. The Panel welcomes a member of the JASC to each of its meetings.

Budget Working Group

The Budget Working Group has performed an important role throughout the year by undertaking detailed reviews of budget and quarterly finance reports, evaluating the proposed budget and precept for 2023/24, and continuing to monitor the Commissioner's financial plans, including capital and revenue investment programmes.

The Group met twice in 2022/23, examining governance arrangements between the Commissioner and Chief Constable to ensure sound oversight of the Force's finances. The Group gave specific attention to:

- The implications for staffing costs of the drive to expand the Force to meet the targeted uplift in officer numbers.
- The prospect of reduced Uplift Grant funding should the Force fail to reach the targeted total officer headcount of 1,100 within the prescribed timescale.
- The implications of a higher than anticipated pay award for officers.
- The effect on capital projects of national supply chain problems, availability of contractors and inflation.
- Pressures affecting the labour market leading to challenging conditions for recruitment to PCSO and staffing vacancies. This was exacerbated by pressure of movement between roles, particularly where Control Centre staff and PCSOs had opted to retrain as police officers.
- The implications of mutual aid costs incurred by Warwickshire Police to call in specialist teams to support policing of the protests at Kingsbury Oil Terminal.
- Overtime costs associated with policing of protests at Kingsbury Oil Terminal and mutual aid support of national events such as the Commonwealth Games.
- Income derived from the Commercial Vetting Service – recognising that the Force has upscaled the Vetting Service in recent years, increasing projected income levels.
- The advantages of securing S106 contributions to support policing – developers are not currently required to contribute towards police services. However, the Commissioner advised that he was working alongside other PCCs to seek an amendment to a parliamentary bill which, if successful, would enable emergency services to be statutory beneficiaries of S106 funding.

Planning and Performance Working Group

The Planning and Performance Working Group has continued to complement the work of the wider Panel by monitoring delivery of the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan, including detailed analysis of Warwickshire Police performance reports focusing on the key areas of Rape, Domestic Abuse and Domestic Violence, 101 Communications, and Total Crime Outcomes.

The Group met twice in 2022/23, focusing on:

- Levels of consistency in the resources and support provided to Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).
- The good progress made by Warwickshire Police to disrupt County Lines activities.
- Integrated Offender Management processes, including intervention programmes and funding arrangements.
- How the Commissioner's holding to account of the Chief Constable is informed by analysis of statistical data – encompassing governance arrangements, performance monitoring and data sources utilised by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).
- Approaches to scrutiny of the PCC's holding to account of measures to address Domestic Abuse and Domestic Violence – recognising that the breadth and complexity of the subject matter required a focused approach which added value to the Commissioner's activities leading to practical, positive outcomes.

The Group also gave specific attention to the progress of the Performance Framework initiative for monitoring delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. It was determined that Red, Amber and Green (RAG) ratings would be utilised within a Performance Dashboard that was accessible and easy to navigate. Five overarching principles would inform development of the Framework – it would be transparent, consistent, proactive, proportionate, and focused. Members praised the good progress that had been made by the OPCC. It was considered that the Framework would provide a valuable tool for ongoing scrutiny.

Training and Development

In May 2022, the Home Office launched a new training and guidance package for Police (Fire) and Crime Panels as part of the recommendations arising from Part One of the PCC Review. This followed two interactive webinars in February 2022 which focused on the principles of good scrutiny. The Panel also participated in a webinar led by the Local Government Association (LGA) which provided an opportunity to hear from a range of speakers to consider current issues relevant to

police (fire) and crime panels, including an update from the Home Office about upcoming priorities and the second phase of the review of Police and Crime Commissioners.

The Panel was also represented at the Annual Conference for Police (Fire) and Crime Panels in November 2022. The theme of the Conference was 'Changing Culture, Moving Things Forward', encompassing an examination of policing culture, standards of conduct, approaches to scrutiny, measuring panel performance, and how to be a 'critical friend' to the PCC.

Public Questions

Public questions provide the Panel with an opportunity to engage with the community and understand more about topics of concern, thereby informing work programming activities. This year, the Panel received a detailed question relating to the long waiting times experienced by some callers contacting 101. The Panel and Commissioner explored the relevant issues in detail, giving specific attention to the causes of high demand for the 101 Service, the factors affecting response times, and how the Force was being held to account to address concerns in this area.

Looking Forward

Building on the progress made in 2022/23, a varied and wide-ranging work programme will support the Panel to deliver effective scrutiny as a critical friend of the Police and Crime Commissioner in the year ahead.

The Panel will take a close interest in the Commissioner's oversight of the Empower Programme, including the effectiveness of the new operating model for the Force. Empower is anticipated to lead to improved engagement with local communities and increased visibility of policing. The Panel will seek to develop an understanding of the effectiveness of Empower to address the concerns outlined by HMICFRS in its most recent PEEL assessment.

Recognising the rapid expansion of the Force in 2022/23, the Panel will continue to monitor the Commissioner's oversight of measures to support the training and development of new recruits, without detriment to day-to-day delivery of services.

The Panel will take a close interest in the Commissioner's oversight of arrangements to recruit to Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) and staffing vacancies, recognising the current pressures affecting the labour market. In common with police forces elsewhere, a significant number of PCSOs and support staff in Warwickshire have made use of opportunities to train as police officers, leading to perpetuation of vacancies. The Panel will seek to support the Commissioner to ensure that the Force is adequately staffed to achieve its strategic objectives.

The Panel will continue to take a close interest in the organisational culture of Warwickshire Police and the safeguards in place to secure high standards of conduct. The Commissioner has agreed to provide a report following completion of the re-vetting programme which the Panel will receive with interest.

The Panel has scheduled an examination of arrangements for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in 2023/24. This will encompass consideration of approaches to ensure that the specialist local knowledge of CSPs is utilised to its best extent as well as an examination of the types of resources provided to each CSP. The Planning and Performance Working Group has also taken a close interest in CSPs; a meeting has been proposed between the Group, OPCC, and CSP chairs to examine existing arrangements, share knowledge, and discuss relevant issues influencing outcomes across boroughs and districts.

In 2022/23, the Panel received an interim update from the PCC of measures to secure environmental sustainability across the Force's activities. In the year ahead, the Panel will seek further assurances from the Commissioner that the Force is

taking steps to meet the challenges of climate change and reduce emissions in line with the Government's commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2050.

In May 2024, the fourth Police and Crime Commissioner elections will be held in England and Wales.

Membership for 2023/24

There are 12 members of the Police and Crime Panel representing the six first and second tier authorities in Warwickshire as well as two independent members. The membership of the Panel is politically and geographically balanced. Each borough or district area is represented by one councillor from the borough / district and a county councillor who represents an electoral division in that area. The number of seats allocated to the political parties is determined by the number of seats held by that party across all the authorities. Reaching the balanced appointment objective is a collective responsibility of the component authorities and the Panel itself.

Police and crime panels are required to have a minimum of two independent members who sit alongside elected local authority members. Independent members bring additional expertise, ensuring that the necessary skills and knowledge are available to support the Panel to discharge its scrutiny function effectively.

The Membership for 2023/24 is:

District and Borough Representatives

Councillor Natalie Gist	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Councillor Clare Golby	Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Councillor Katie Hunt	Warwick District Council
Councillor Ray Jarvis	North Warwickshire Borough Council
Councillor Derek Poole	Rugby Borough Council

Warwickshire County Council Representatives

Councillor Barbara Brown
Councillor Jenny Fradgley
Councillor Dave Humphreys
Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher

Independent Members

Mr Andrew Davies
Mr Andy Davis

There is one remaining appointment to be made to the Panel at the time of publication of this report.

Get Involved

Listening to the views of residents is an important part of the work of the Police and Crime Panel. All meetings are open to the public and anyone who lives or works in Warwickshire is welcome to submit a question to either the Panel or the Police and Crime Commissioner.

If you wish to submit a question, please submit it in writing at least three working days in advance of the meeting using the contact details below:

Email: democraticservices@warwickshire.gov.uk

or

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