

OFFICIAL



Philip Seccombe
Police and Crime
Commissioner
for Warwickshire

Police and Crime Panel

22 June 2023

Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Report Author | OPCC Warwickshire |
| Report Date | 13 June 2023 |
| Security Classification | Official |
| Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act? | Yes |

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the members of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel with an update on my key activities as the county's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), and that of my Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC), and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) since the Panel's previous meeting on Thursday 6 April 2023.

2. Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

Emma Daniell is continuing in her role as the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. She is enjoying the role and continuing to work alongside the force and our joint partners to drive forward prevention. Emma is often out and about with the policing teams hearing from the officers and staff how we can assist to improve their effectiveness.

Emma is supporting the implementation of the 'Serious Violence Strategy' across the county and is the Deputy Chair for the Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG). Emma is also the Senior Responsible Officer for the Drug and Alcohol Strategic Partnership, bringing together all joint partner agencies in a cohesive way to ensure that Warwickshire can deliver on the 'National Combatting Drugs Outcome Framework'. Emma also continues to drive our work with young people in Warwickshire attending youth groups and forums.

3. Local Elections

The local elections in Warwickshire that were held on 4 May 2023 has changed the composition of the Police and Crime Panel, which must remain geographically and politically representative. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome the new members to the Panel. For those remaining members, I also offer my congratulations to those that have been re-elected and I continue to look forward to the 'support and challenge' that you provide to me. I also wish to express my gratitude to the past members of the Panel for their contributions to this important democratic assembly and for their public service.

4. Annual Report 2022/23

Under Section 12 of the Police and Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, as the 'elected policing body' a police and crime commissioner has certain obligations in respect of producing an annual report: -

1. Each elected local policing body must produce an annual report on:
 - a. The exercise of the body's functions in each financial year, and
 - b. The progress which has been made in the financial year in meeting the police and crime objectives in the body's police and crime plan.
2. As soon as practicable after producing an annual report, the elected local policing body must send the report to the relevant police and crime panel.

OFFICIAL

3. The elected local policing body must attend before the panel at the public meeting arranged by the panel to: -
 - a. Present the report to the panel, and
 - b. Answer the panel's questions on the report.
4. The elected local policing body must: -
 - a. Give the panel a response to any report or recommendations on the annual report, and
 - b. Publish any such response.
5. It is for the police and crime panel to determine the manner in which a response to a report or recommendations is to be published in accordance with subsection (4)(b).
6. An elected local policing body must arrange for each annual report to be published.
7. It is for the elected local policing body to determine the way an annual report is to be published.

A draft of my Annual Report 2022/23 is therefore attached at Appendix A for the information of the Panel and I am happy to answer any question that may arise. In addition, an abbreviated version of the report has also been produced in a more 'accessible' form for information of the public.

These annual reports reflect my work, and that of my Deputy PCC and the OPCC during the period of 2022/23 in fulfilling my statutory responsibilities and delivering the priorities of my Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025 to realise my vision to, *'reduce crime, support victims, make communities safer'*.

Once the Panel's formal response has been provided and considered, then the reports will be published on the OPCC website at: www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk

5. Trust and confidence

Trust and confidence in the police service is a critical issue to the residents and communities of Warwickshire, who I serve. So in my previous report to the Panel I commented upon the recent national cases of corruption in the police service, compounded by the adverse findings of the Casey Report 'An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service', which was commissioned in the wake of Sarah Everard's murder.

These abhorrent cases and the disturbing findings of the report have rightly raised national concerns regarding the culture and legitimacy of the police service and its ability to effectively prevent, and to root out, those who are unfit to serve.

In my report I also noted the national arrangements that were being undertaken by the Home Office, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to address these concerns. Also, that the National Police Chiefs Council had requested that all police forces in England and Wales cross-check their officers against the National Police Database (PND) to identify offenders who may have remained undetected.

OFFICIAL

On 22 March 2023, under 'Section 36 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011' I made a formal 'Information Request' to the chief constable of Warwickshire Police. The request sought information on four key areas: -

1. Recruitment and vetting processes: Including the force's compliance with the College of Policing 'Authorised Professional Practice' (APP) for vetting.
2. Misogyny in Warwickshire Police.
3. The force's Anti-Corruption Unit.
4. Performance and misconduct matters.

A confidential response to this Information Request has subsequently been provided by both the force's Head of Professional Standards Department (PSD) and the Head of Vetting, providing reassurance regarding the force's arrangements and confirming that the force's vetting processes are fully compliant with, and in some respects exceeds, the requirements of the College of Policing's APP.

On 5 June 2023, at a meeting with the Head of PSD I received further assurance that the initial triage of the PND 'data-wash' had not identified any significant concerns for Warwickshire Police.

Of further note is the implementation of the multi-faceted 'Operation Amethyst' by Warwickshire Police. It is the force's initiative to eradicate inappropriate behaviours in the force, encouraging all its members to challenge and report improper and unprofessional behaviours. The force has stated that it is committed to maintaining high standards - building trust and confidence in Warwickshire Police as a supportive, professional, and inclusive workplace; where all victims and witnesses will be treated appropriately and afforded dignity.

6. Police and Crime Plan

A summary of activities undertaken in support of the five principal objectives of my Police and Crime Plan since the commencement of 2023/24 are as follows: -

6.1. Fight crime and reduce offending.

a) Violent Crime

My Policy and Partnerships Team continue to work closely with partners to support the delivery of the county's Serious Violence Prevention Strategy and oversee delivery of the Serious Violence Duty, including the undertaking of a countywide Needs Assessment. Work on this will continue over the next two years, including delivery of a range of county and local intervention to reduce and prevent serious violence.

b) Serious Organised Crime

My Policy and Partnership Team have been working closely with Warwickshire Police, Warwickshire County Council, and other partners, to review the necessary partnership governance and oversight arrangements for Serious Organised Crime (SOC), recognising the links from this to Serious Violence, and to develop and propose new arrangements that are fit for the future. This work is progressing, with

OFFICIAL

outline agreement reached about a way forward, which will be reported in full in due course.

c) Reducing Reoffending

In August 2021, I collaborated with the Home Office in the funding of a new Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme in the county. On 31 March 2023 that funding ended, but I am pleased to report that with my offer of continued match funding, my Policy and Partnership Team were able to make a successful bid to the Home Office for additional funding of £300,000 over the next two years. This is an excellent achievement that further supports my Police and Crime Plan priorities and protects vulnerable victims.

6.2. Deliver visible and effective policing.

a) Extra Policing & b) Neighbourhood Policing

As I state in my Annual Report 2022/23, now that the target for police officer numbers has been reached, the force's recruitment activity in 2023/24 will be re-directed to the recruitment of PCSOs; alongside increasing the number of Special Constables who make a vital contribution to visible front-line policing. I will be doing all I can to support the force in achieving these aims in the coming months.

c) Transforming Warwickshire Police

In my previous report of the Panel I commented upon Warwickshire Police 'Empower' change programme that has three separate strategic strands of People / Place / Technology.

On 24 April 2023, the 'Empower-People' programme was implemented to create a new operating model for the force. I am pleased to be able to report that this significant change to the way in which the force functions has landed well and I remain optimistic that it will deliver the force's ambition to improve prevention, engagement, and investigations.

A fundamentally important element to this new model is the establishment of three geographical Local Policing Areas (LPA) for the county, namely North, South, Eastern. Each of these LPAs is now under the command of a local Chief Inspector to improve localised responsibility and accountability and will undoubtedly help drive improvements in performance and provide a better model for effective engagement with local communities and elected representatives.

The other elements of 'Empower-Place' and 'Empower-Technology' continue to be progressed by the force and are monitored and scrutinised by my office through formal governance arrangements.

6.3. Keep people safe and reduce harm.

a) Violence Against Women and Girls

My office has continued to work closely with Warwickshire County Council and other partners in delivering the aims of the county's 'Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy'. This has included reviewing the governance arrangements and working closely to link the work of the county's VAWG Board with the work of the

OFFICIAL

Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), which I chair. This is particularly important in relation to progress to improve criminal justice outcomes for victims of Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse. My Policy and Partnership Officer for Criminal Justice, who also coordinates the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) on my behalf, now attends the VAWG Board to ensure a holistic approach.

b) Vulnerability

- **Hate Crime**

My office has worked in partnership with Warwickshire County Council and the Equality and Inclusion Partnership to organise the next Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board 'Big Conversation' event, which is taking place on 14 June 2023. This will be an excellent event that will enable partners to collaborate and address hate crime and discrimination that is faced by Warwickshire's communities.

- **Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

My office has been working closely with Warwickshire Police, partners, and commissioned service providers, to ensure that children and young people who become involved in, or are subject to, Harmful Sexual Behaviour, including sexting and the sharing of intimate images, are able to benefit from appropriate interventions and support.

c) Road Safety

My mission to reduce death and serious injury on Warwickshire roads continues to retain good support and engagement from Warwickshire Police and the multi-agency Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership, which I chair.

At the beginning of April 2023 we hosted a 'Motorbike Action Day' at Caffeine & Machine near Stratford, with the aim of sparking engagement and discussion at the start of the new motorcycle season to initiate a long-term change in behaviours.

The event was well-attended and included bikers and drivers from across the county and beyond, able to relax and show off their machinery in a safe environment.

The event was organised in conjunction with Project EDWARD, the national initiative to create a society that enjoys 'Every Day Without a Road Death.' It has a similar



campaign of events running across the country over the summer. Two of the busiest roads for motorcycles (the A5 and A46) pass through the county, so it was very appropriate the national campaign began in our county.

Stands from the Partnership, Warwickshire Fire & Rescue's Biker Down scheme, Warwickshire Police's Bike Safe rider training initiative and South Warwickshire Advanced Riders were among those offering

OFFICIAL

information and safety advice during the day. A short film of the day can be view:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpuBt_gx9SM

6.4. Strengthen communities.

a) Involving communities

My office continues to operate both the volunteer Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) and the Appropriate Adult (AA) schemes. The ICVs are a well-established system of volunteers who attend police stations unannounced to check on the treatment of people detained in custody. They talk to the detainees and observe the conditions in which they are held and ensure that their rights and entitlements are being observed. The AA's support vulnerable adults in police custody and help to make sure they understand what is happening and the process is fair, the scheme ensures that vulnerable people can understand the criminal justice process, reducing the risk of unjust convictions.

My office continues its drive to further grow the numbers of volunteers who want to give their time to make a difference to their community and thereby strengthen the excellent service that is provided.

In the first week of June 2023, during National Volunteers' Week, members of the OPCC presented at a volunteering fair at Nuneaton Job Centre organised by Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (CAVA).

Over the course of the day they met with scores of people interested in volunteering, telling them about the opportunities available to join the Independent Custody Visiting and Appropriate Adults schemes.

I am a strong supporter of volunteering in all its forms and the work of volunteers in keeping Warwickshire safe cannot be underestimated, so I would encourage anyone



interested in donating their time to take inspiration and find out more about how they can get involved. More information on volunteering opportunities can be found on the OPCC website at:

[Volunteer Schemes - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire \(warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/volunteering)

b) Crime Prevention

OFFICIAL

In May 2023, I announced the recipients of my Police and Crime Commissioner Grant scheme, which this year had the theme of 'Prevention and Diversion' (see Section 9 below for further details).

c) Partnership working

- **Anti-Social Behaviour**

My Policy and Partnerships Team are currently supporting community safety and crime prevention partners by undertaking a holistic review of a large range of national plans, guidance, frameworks, and toolkits in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), which are linked to the Government's recent publication of its new ASB Action Plan. The findings for this are being presented to the next county ASB practitioners' group.

6.5. Deliver better justice for all.

a) Victims and Witnesses & b) Improved Communication

The main issue to report upon is the introduction to Parliament of the 'Victims and Prisoners Bill'. The Bill was initially placed before Parliament in March and had reached second reading stage by May 2023. It is anticipated the Bill will receive Royal Assent in early 2024.

The introduction of the Bill has received mixed reaction. In a positive sense it represents the government's manifesto intention to create victim rights (12 rights in total) that are enshrined in legislation. Conversely, victim groups and representatives feel the proposed Bill is not strong enough and has mixed offender / prisoner issues with victim issues, when it is argued the two matters should be kept separate to ensure victim-survivors have a valued status within the criminal justice system.

The headline features of the Bill are that children born because of rape are now recognised formally as victims of crime; prisoners with whole life orders will not be allowed to marry; the parole board will be strengthened; an Independent Public Advocate will be appointed to represent victim-survivors of major disasters, such as Hillsborough, Manchester Arena, and Grenfell.

From a PCC perspective, key elements of the Bill need to achieve greater compliance with the 'Code of Practice for Victims of Crime' and the need for greater collaboration between agencies, especially health, on the issue of commissioning victims' services. It is particularly pleasing to note the Bill now formally recognises the role and important work of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA), and the Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA).

From a local perspective, significant pressures remain in respect of crown court delays and the time taken for cases to get to trial. There is also growing concern in respect of the cost and availability of translators for victims whose first language is not English. There is also pressure on waiting lists for counselling for the victim-survivors of sexual assault.

All criminal justice agencies remain committed to keeping communication with victims and witnesses as a top priority. This is a core thread of the Victims Code. Performance in this area is monitored by my office who chair the Victim and Witness

OFFICIAL

Forum. Warwickshire Police, particularly, scrutinise communications plans linked to investigation plans and challenge officers when contact timelines and agreements with the victims are not being met.

c) Justice Outcomes

My office and I continue to prioritise working in partnership with all key agencies to ensure that the Criminal Justice System (CJS) operates as smoothly as possible for Warwickshire residents who may transcend through the CJS either as victims - survivors, witnesses, or perpetrators. As previously stated, it will take some time to return to a pre-pandemic 'normality', but I am committed to leading our criminal justice partners to ensure we are applying our best efforts.

As the Chair of Warwickshire's Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), I can confidently report that the Board continues to be well attended and functional. In Warwickshire we always seek to improve where possible, therefore the LCJB is now being refreshed, as directed by the Criminal Justice lead and newly issued LCJB national guidance.

With my support Warwickshire Police remain engaged in Operation Safeguard. The Criminal Justice System Strategic Command (CJSSC) is a national mechanism that continues to oversee and monitor the prison capacity crisis. Demand for the designated cells at Nuneaton Justice Centre (8) has been consistently low since the introduction of the operation, nevertheless I am committed to ensuring Warwickshire's positive co-operation within the wider criminal justice system.

As reported previously, there are still pressures in the court system in respect of Crown Court back logs, particularly due to limited judicial capacity. Partners are working together to help support both the Courts and the Judiciary where possible, and I hope to report on positive improvements in the near future. Furthermore, my office continues work in supporting Warwickshire Police in its journey to prepare for the new 'Two Tier Out of Court Disposal Framework'. This new framework has recently undergone a two-week trial period across Rugby, the data from this pilot will help to shape the future process of this initiative.

7. Scrutiny and Assurance

My principal obligations as a police and crime commissioner include: -

1. To secure the maintenance of the police force, by setting the budget.
2. To secure that the police force is efficient and effective.
3. To hold the chief constable to account for the exercise of his functions and the functions of the persons under his / her direction and control.

The following are some examples of the arrangements that are in place to facilitate these statutory requirements.

7.1. Police and Crime Plan delivery monitoring

The OPCC have introduced a Quarterly Assurance Meeting to assess progress against the objectives and the success measures of the Police and Crime Plan 2021-

OFFICIAL

2025. The progress made has been reported upon in the Annual Report 2022/23 and is therefore not replicated in this report.

7.2. Governance and Performance Board

I hold a 'Governance and Performance Board' (GPB) each month with Warwickshire Police's chief constable, together with senior officers from the force and the OPCC. The schedule of meetings incorporates an in-depth scrutiny of force performance and finance, along with topical issues of interest. At each GPB meeting a 'Focus' topic is selected for additional scrutiny and minutes of these meetings are published on the OPCC website. This year financial year the subjects have been: -

- April - Sustainability
- May - Road Safety
- June - Cyber Crime

7.3. HMICFRS

7.3.1. Annual State of Policing 2022

The first annual assessment of policing in England and Wales by Andy Cooke as the Chief Inspector of Constabulary has recently been published and I shall be carefully studying its content, observations, and recommendations with keen interest.

Some of the key messages from the report are that public confidence in the police is precarious. He has called for major reform, including new powers for the inspectors of constabulary, including the power to give direction to a police force when there are significant concerns about public safety.

Mr Cooke has also noted that the police need to prioritise the issues that matter most to the public, where forces are failing to get the basics right in investigation and responding to the public, and they need to concentrate on effective neighbourhood policing. He also said that critical elements of the police service's leadership and workforce arrangements need substantial reform, such as more scrutiny on vetting and recruitment processes, including for chief officers.

He considers that forces need to show professionalism, get the basics right when it comes to investigating crime, and respond properly when someone dials 999. This is what matters most to the communities they serve and this is the way forward for the police to regain the public's trust.

There are elements of the report that closely align with my Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025. Several of the concerns expressed are already being addressed by Warwickshire Police, principally through the Empower change programme, and I will continue to scrutinise force performance and 'hold to account' the chief constable on these critical matters.

7.3.2. Child Protection

In February 2022, HMICFRS visited Warwickshire Police for the National Child Protection Inspection. They consequently made 8 recommendations to the force for improvement. In February 2023, HMICFRS returned to Warwickshire Police to conduct a re-inspection and to review the progress the force had made in meeting the

OFFICIAL

recommendations made. On 7 June 2023, HMICFRS published its report: 'National child protection inspection post-inspection review: Warwickshire Police'. The key findings of the re-inspection were that: -

- HMICFRS is pleased to see Warwickshire Police has committed considerable time, resources, and energy to improvements.
- The Empower-People operating model has resulted in a marked increase in the number of investigators of child abuse, with specialist training to support them.
- There have been multiple guidance documents and videos created for a variety of child protection issues.
- Training to help the decision making of the Operations Communication Centre has been delivered.
- There has been a prompt response to reviewing the diary appointment system to ensure safeguarding.
- A new focus at the Daily Management Meeting to focus on child protection, including missing persons, and child and young people held in police custody.

Warwickshire Police has improved in many areas, particularly:

- Prompt action in Online Child Sexual Exploitation investigations.
- Improved Registered Sexual Offence Offender Management, including sharing information with frontline staff;
- The sharing of risk information with statutory safeguarding partners.

The following areas still require improvement:

- Inconsistent response to missing persons enquiries.
- Insufficient focus on the welfare of children and young persons during their detention and delays releasing after charge.

HMICFRS inspections enable me to focus on issues of concern in securing an effective and efficient police service for Warwickshire. This report also serves to illustrate the nature of the child protection measures that the force is engaged in, much of which does not appear in the crime statistics and remains hidden to the public. I shall be 'holding to account' the chief constable to ensure that this progress is maintained and that the areas identified for improvement are addressed.

7.4. Police complaint reviews

Since 1 February 2020, the Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020 came into effect. From this date the OPCC assumed authority for reviewing the handling and outcome of certain public complaints made against Warwickshire Police. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) retains this responsibility for more serious and complex public complaints.

Since the 1 April 2023, the OPCC have conducted 5 complaint reviews and have upheld 2 of them, in that the handling and outcome to the complaint by Warwickshire

OFFICIAL

Police has not been reasonable and proportionate. The recommendations made to Warwickshire Police arising from these reviews have been accepted by the force.

On 15 May 2023 I met with the OPCC Complaint Review Officers to consider the esoteric nature of the police complaints legislation and guidance, to gain a deeper appreciation of the spectrum of reviews that have been considered and the consequential recommendations made to Warwickshire Police. This insight as to the issues and themes that result in public complaints against the police provides me with an invaluable insight to enable me to 'hold to account' the chief constable and to fulfil my responsibility to secure the maintenance of an effective and efficient police service for Warwickshire.

8. Engagement

Over the past quarter, Emma Daniell and I have participated in a diverse range of meeting with members of the public, partner agencies and elected officers. My programme of engagement seeks to gain feedback from as diverse a range of participants as possible and is designed to cover all aspects of community safety.

8.1 Knife Angel

Perhaps the highest profile event I attended during this period was on 1 June 2023 at the official unveiling of the Knife Angel in Nuneaton town centre. Created by sculptor Alfie Bradley in conjunction with the British Ironwork Centre, the Knife Angel has been created from 100,000 seized blades collected by 43 police constabularies. The sculpture is multi-purpose, helping to educate communities about the negative impacts of knife crime whilst also acting as a poignant memorial to those who have lost their lives to knife crime.

I provided funding to enable the Knife Angel to come to Warwickshire and have been pleased to work with Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council and Warwickshire Police in making it happen. Its arrival marks a month-long focus on preventing violence and aggression, with a wide range of activities accompanying its visit to encourage everyone to get involved.

OFFICIAL



Engagement awareness workshops for parents and students are taking place at primary and secondary schools across the area. There are also various community and school art projects, and knife surrender bins are in place at various locations across the borough for people to anonymously dispose of knives or other bladed items.

As a sculpture, the Knife Angel delivers a poignant reminder of the lives lost and the devastating impact knife crime has. But it is also a fantastic focal point to start the important discussions on how, as a society, we can begin to challenge some of the underlying factors that allow violent crime to exist.

My overriding hope is that we can use the Knife Crime's visit to secure a lasting legacy by encouraging a grass roots movement to end serious violence.

8.2. Kenilworth Show

That same week as the Knife Angel presentation, on Saturday 3 June 2023 I attended the Kenilworth Agricultural Show held at Stoneleigh. Also present at the show were partner agencies from the Warwickshire County Council Community Safety Team, Warwickshire Police's Rural Crime Team, together with the Rural Crime Advisors from Stratford District Council. I provide funding for the Rural Crime Advisors posts, who are employed by the local authority, and they work closely with other partners including the police to prevent rural crime and to ensure the best possible level of service is provided to the victims of crime in our rural communities.

I am a passionate supporter of a rural communities and this well attended event provided an ideal opportunity for me to engage and to listen to their concerns, and to also explain my role and the steps that I am taking together with partners to make their communities safer.

8.3. Notable Events

Some of the other notable events I have been engaged in since the start of the financial year are: -

April 2023

OFFICIAL

- 02/04/2023 – Rugby Street Pastors Commissioning evening.
- 04/04/2023 – High Sherriff's Awards, Warwick.
- 18/04/2023 – We Stand Together conference on hate crime (online).
- 25/04/2023 – We Stand Together conference on hate crime, Rugby.
- 25/04/2023 – Prison Me No Way event, organised by Young People First, Leamington Spa.

May 2023

- 27/05/2023 – National Sikh Policing Association event, Warwick Castle.
- 07/05/2023 – County Service to celebrate the Coronation, Warwick.
- 09/05/2023 – Child Friendly Warwickshire Youth Voice event, Warwick.
- 12/05/2023 – Food & Faith Festival, Nuneaton.

June 2023

- 09/06/2023 – Youth group at the Harvest Fellowship, Rugby.
- 14/06/2023 – Big Conversation on Discrimination and Hate Crime, Coventry.
- 20/06/2023 – Community engagement event, Coleshill Hub.

In terms of engagement with elected members, during this period I have appeared before Overview and Scrutiny Committees at Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council. In addition, I similarly appeared at public meetings of Warwick, Atherstone and Shipston Town Councils and Wellesbourne Parish Council.

Forthcoming engagements include the National Rural Crime Network's conference later this month, the Pride events in Nuneaton and Leamington Spa and a summer residents involvement day in Bedworth.

9. Commissioning and Grants

9.1. Grants and Commissioned Services Partnership Event

In May 2023, I announced the recipients of my Police and Crime Commissioner Grant scheme for the year with more than 50 projects receiving funding. These enterprises seek to either prevent crime or anti-social behaviour or divert people away from a life of crime. For the road safety initiatives, the supported schemes target unsafe road use and dangerous driving behaviours and provide interventions to encourage safer use of the roads.

The grants scheme supports organisations of all shapes and sizes who do fantastic work to help make Warwickshire a safer place for us all. This year we have a range of projects which support different aspects of my Police and Crime Plan, with a mix of organisations which are new, and others that are familiar to us.

OFFICIAL

When considered alongside the other services for victims I fund through my commissioning programme, this makes for a multi-million-pound commitment each year to reduce crime, support victims and make communities safer.

In May 2023, representatives from the projects that were successful in being awarded grant funding, together with those organisations that I commission to provide a range of services for victims-survivors, came together at Benn Hall in Rugby to receive my thanks for the work they do and to provide them with an opportunity to showcase it to a range of partners.



The aim of the event was to enable greater cooperation and coordination between service providers and boost knowledge among public-facing services of the range of specialist support that is available to help support victims-survivors and divert people away from crime. We heard some inspiring stories from the various presenters and I am excited to see how some of those collaborations begin to come together.

A Grant and Commissioning Directory has been produced providing a summary of the activity of each of these organisations and projects and these can be found on the OPCC website at: -

<https://www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/your-pcc/commissioners-grants/2023-24-commissioners-grants-scheme-awards/>

10. Finance

On 31 May 2023, the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts documents were signed off by the respective Chief Finance Officers from the OPCC and Warwickshire Police and have now been published on the OPCC website. This date is the statutory deadline for the publication of the pre-audit Statement of Accounts and has been brought forward from last year's deadline of the 31 July. Achieving this deadline represents a considerable achievement that reflects well on both organisations finance functions.

OFFICIAL

The next step is the external audit of the two statements and on the 8 June 2023 the external auditors will commence their work. The deadline for the completion of the audit is the 30 September 2023 and I look forward to sharing the outcome of that process in due course. Last year we were one of just 12% of Local Authorities, police force, and OPCCs that met the audit deadline date - I therefore remain optimistic for this year too.

The 2022/23 revenue budget outturn for the PCC and Chief Constable is £119.738m, which is £1.650m less than the £121.388m of available core funding, consisting of the government grant and police precept.

The final outturn is broadly consistent with the forecast reported in recent months and has arisen primarily due to underspends on officer, staff and PCSO pay related costs, and also from increased income. The underspend will be allocated to reserves at year-end to partially fund future services, including some capital investment which will help to reduce the need to borrow and thus generate future year revenue savings. Whilst the reoccurrence of underspending on staff and PCSO pay is reliant on successful recruitment to vacant posts in 2023/24, the underspend on officer pay is unlikely to continue at the same rate seen in 2022/23.

The officer headcount at the end of March was 1,113 officers, and the Home Office conditions for the 2023/24 uplift grant require that the baseline headcount of 1,110 officers must be sustained, to secure the full payment of grant. I will be monitoring this closely at the monthly governance meetings.

High demand for contractor vetting services has continued and this is being carefully managed and monitored by the vetting service leadership team to ensure that customer service levels are being met, income is being recovered in a timely fashion, and that the ambitious income generation targets are achieved through improved efficiency and productivity.

The force has attracted and generated substantial other income over the year, exceeding the budget by £1.593m. This includes regional organised crime funding to disrupt serious and organised crime; reimbursement for legal costs associated with the Plymouth public enquiry; custody provision relating to making cell space available to the prison service; other reimbursements for work arising from national portfolios. A further £0.748m of increased grant has been received to partially meet the police officer pay award costs, and also the incentivised grant for recruiting over the uplift target.

Some additional expenditure has also been incurred, most notably through planned increases in revenue contributions to capital, to partially fund 2022/23 investment, thus reducing the need to borrow and helping to generate a more sustainable approach to capital financing over the medium-term.

The need to identify cashable savings is a constant challenge, as is high inflation. The 2023/24 budget & medium-term financial plan (MTFP) has identified a £3m gap between core funding and operating expenditure over the medium-term. The chief constable has committed to delivering £1m of savings from April 2024 and I look forward to receiving details on how this may be achieved in the coming months. My aim remains to deliver a financial strategy and MTFP, which is affordable, sustainable, and resilient (reserves), which factors in the risk that the current

OFFICIAL

challenges pose and which in turn supports the delivery of my Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025.

The final 2022/23 outturn for capital is £9.039m across estates work, ICT projects and fleet replacement. This has been funded primarily through a combination of revenue funding, reserves, S106 funding and borrowing. This level of investment will help to ensure that our estate and fleet are both compliant and fit for purpose, and that we continue to invest in digital services to maintain the infrastructure that will help to improve our productivity and efficiency and so avoid the re-accumulation of 'technical debt'. This outturn represents an underspend against the revised budget of £1.662m. Some capital work had been accelerated and brought forward into 2022/23, although some other planned work will slip into 2023/24 and beyond.

Reserve levels remain resilient and are set at £15.013m as at the 31 March 2023, by virtue of the 2022/23 outturn and funding position. This total includes the £6.0m general reserve and this remains our main mechanism for managing risk in an increasingly uncertain world. Aside from managing risk, a proportion will also be used to fund capital and meet other known commitments over the medium-term in line with our MTFP and reserve strategy. The MTFP covers a five-year-period and shows reserve levels reducing but being maintained above £10m during this period.

11. Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

In May 2023, my office welcomed Marie Darwen as a Policy and Partnership Officer to the team, this was to fill an existing and budgeted vacancy. In addition, an intern has been recently recruited to support the office and we are awaiting their start following the necessary pre-employment checks, this will be a first for my office and an exciting development opportunity for the successful candidate.