



**Philip Seccombe  
Police and Crime  
Commissioner  
for Warwickshire**

**Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.**

**Report of the**

**Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner.**

## **1. Intention.**

The purpose of this report is to provide the members of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel (PCP) with an update on my key activities as the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Warwickshire since the PCP's last meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020. That meeting had originally been scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 but was brought forward in the calendar due to the political restrictions imposed by the period of 'purdah' associated with the PCC elections 2020 – how things have changed in just a few short months!

## **2. Covid 19 Pandemic.**

With the consequential postponement of the 2020 PCC elections due to the impact of Covid 19, my term of office has now been extended for an additional twelve months until the new elections to be held in May 2021.

The role of the PCC is to be the voice of the people and to hold the Chief Constable to account, in doing so I have set out my key priorities in the Police and Crime Plan 2016 - 2021. I have determined that this plan should remain for the foreseeable future in order to achieve my ambition of 'A safer, more secure Warwickshire'.

Whilst this plan may remain in place during the remainder of my term of office, it is clear that business as usual cannot continue in response to the Covid 19 public health emergency. I have therefore produced a 'Covid 19 Supplement' to the plan that sets out in business continuity management terms what the 'mission critical activities' (MCA) of my Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) will be during the Covid 19 period. These MCAs are to: -

- i. Secure an effective and efficient police service for the area.
- ii. Hold the Chief Constable to account for the running the force.
- iii. Maintain community safety by bringing together partners and stakeholders to make sure local priorities are both coherent and coordinated.
- iv. These three statutory responsibilities will be underpinned by ensuring that the OPCC will do all that it can to ensure an effective response in the police and crime landscape to the many challenges that Covid 19 presents.

The Covid 19 Supplement is complemented by a bespoke 'Covid 19 Delivery Plan' to provide focus and to enable OPCC activity and progress to be captured during this period. In recognition of the ever changing requirements as we journey through the pandemic, the Delivery Plan has been separated into the distinct phases of 'Stay Home' that commenced on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 and the current 'Stay Alert' phase that commenced on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020. It is envisaged that it will be further amended as a dynamic document as further phases are introduced as circumstances change.

The OPCC has continued to operate successfully, albeit remotely from its offices in Warwick, during this period with 'home working' introduced for all members of staff. The OPCC remains in communication by email and telephone and continues to respond to all contact and correspondence received from the public and partners. Since the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, some 450 such contacts have been managed by my office to date.

In meeting my responsibility to also support the chief constable, in the initial stages of the Covid 19 emergency two of the OPCC's Policy and Development Officers were seconded to work with Warwickshire Police in the force's Covid 19 Planning Team. In addition, the OPCC Head of Media and Communications provided support and resilience to the force's Corporate Communications team.

- Appendix A - Covid 19 Supplement.

### 3. **Black Lives Matter**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020 was designated as Stephen Lawrence Day. The day was coordinated by the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, which works to inspire and support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and to create a fairer society. I supported the Trust with funding to help create a bursary scheme to enable further research to be undertaken into effective race relations within policing. Under the bursary, selected Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) police officers will undertake a short scholarship each year to research a different aspect of race relations and inclusivity.

As I said at the time, "Commemorations like Stephen Lawrence Day are an important part in helping to reinforce that there is no place in society for racism and to empower young people to discover what they are capable of and to have hope in their own futures. There is still work to do before we can say we are a truly tolerant society and we need to continue to guard against racism and hate crime in all its forms".

The recent dreadful scenes that lead to the death of George Floyd during a police arrest in the USA, and as a direct consequence the protest activity in the UK that has been generated in support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, has brought into sharp relief the reality of my words and continues to raise important questions about equality and racism in both our systems and society.

As I said in my press release of the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020 on this matter, which largely preceded the UK BLM demonstrations, this was a death that should not have occurred and justice must be served. It causes us to acknowledge that racism and inequality continue to persist, regardless of the progress that has been made in recent times. Imbalances and biases remain that need to be understood and addressed if we are to achieve a fair society for all.

In the UK, we police by consent. This means that our officers are drawn from the communities that they serve and must understand the requirements of our diverse populations. I want to ensure that Warwickshire Police is truly representative of all those it serves and there is an opportunity to

improve representation as we recruit more police officers and police staff in the coming years. Considerable efforts are being made to ensure that Warwickshire Police continues to become more representative and a Positive Action Team has been established to enhance the recruitment of under-represented communities. As a result, over the past year the proportion of new BAME officers has increased to 5.1% for police officers, 7.5% for police staff and just under 10% for PCSOs coming from such BAME backgrounds. These figures compare to a BAME population of 7% for the county.

I have an important role in holding the police to account and providing independent scrutiny on areas of practice that cause community concern, particularly in terms of 'stop and search' and the 'use of force'. It's important that the public have confidence in policing and so I have regularly asked questions of the force to seek reassurance that it is being carried out in a way that is both appropriate and proportionate, and I will continue to do so. Whilst there has been positive progress, more still needs to be done to ensure all communities are confident in the policing response. I remain keen to hear people's experiences across the whole of the criminal justice system in the county.

Across the wider community safety landscape, my office are scoping our approach to BAME issues with the intention of commissioning a piece of research so that we can truly ensure that the services that are there to support them are properly meeting their needs and being accessed equally. This will better enable me to hold to account and, where necessary, challenge agencies to help formulate lasting solutions that improve the lives of all.

These issues are also societal and so change will not be easy nor instant. However, I do want to ensure that through a collective effort, we create for all of our communities my ambition of 'A safer, more secure Warwickshire'.

### **3. Termination of the Alliance.**

The PCP have requested an update on the progress made towards establishing Warwickshire Police as an independent force after the end of the strategic alliance with West Mercia Police and I am pleased to report that an overall financial settlement has now been reached between the two police forces.

West Mercia Police has agreed a settlement for Warwickshire Police worth £10.77 million to cover the costs of separating the services the two forces had previously shared. This agreement means that the force will receive a fair settlement that recognises the considerable costs that we have had to bear in re-establishing services within the county since the decision to terminate the alliance was made by West Mercia.

All services, with the notable exception of four, were separated out of these arrangements at the beginning of April 2020. However, further agreement has now been reached for the two forces to

deliver these four key services together to ensure a smooth transition until such time as new arrangements in the county are established. The four new collaboration agreements cover: -

- Information Technology (IT) services.
- Forensic Services.
- Transactional Services - Human Resources and Payroll.
- File storage facilities.

These new collaboration agreements cover the interim period of April 2020 to April 2021 and can be extended if necessary. After this date, Warwickshire Police will move to delivering IT, Transactional Services and Forensic Services with West Midlands Police. In the case of file storage facilities, Warwickshire Police has committed to buy a continued service hosted by West Mercia Police.

These agreements represents a real opportunity for Warwickshire Police to take advantage of the 'best in class services' delivered by West Midlands Police and is an important part of our programme to deliver a sustainable future for Warwickshire Police. It also enables both forces to be able to fully focus on what is needed to support their local communities during the Covid 19 emergency.

#### **4. Warwickshire Police Establishment.**

I have promised that the additional funding that taxpayers across Warwickshire have contributed over the last two years would be used to put extra 'boots on the ground' and ensure that policing numbers would top the 1,000 mark, one of the priorities of my Police and Crime Plan.

Figures recently released by the Home Office reveal that Warwickshire Police has been able to recruit more new police officers as a percentage of their overall strength than any other police force in England and Wales. It means that at the end of March 2020 the force has seen its total head count grow by over 14% , representing nearly double the rate of the next nearest police force in England and Wales.

This uplift in resources translates into an actual strength at May 2020 of 1026 Warwickshire police officers and we will also see a further increase when we get our share of the second phase of Government funding for the national uplift in officers, raising the predicted establishment at April 2021 to 1059 officers.

The direct benefit to the communities of Warwickshire from this increase in officers can be seen in the focus the force are applying to a range of key areas of concern for the public. New or expanded teams will now provide extra resilience in tackling vehicle crime and rural crime, while also giving enhanced policing visibility to communities, businesses and retailers in the larger town centres across Warwickshire: -

- Two vehicle crime teams have been launched – one based at Bedworth and one at Greys Mallory near Warwick. The teams will focus on tackling vehicle crime to enhance the force's commitment to reducing these offences.
- The Rural Crime Team, which was launched last year, will shortly double in size with officers split between Stratford, Atherstone and Rugby.
- The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) will be enhanced through the addition of an extra five police officers to supplement the work of existing teams in the town centres of Rugby, Leamington, Warwick, Stratford and Nuneaton.

## **5. Criminal Justice.**

I recognise that one of the key areas affected by Covid 19 is the criminal justice system and the associated disruption to cases being brought before the court in a timely manner. Accordingly, I have both led and participated in partner initiatives to resolve these issues.

At the local level, in April I chaired an emergency meeting of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) that convened agencies across the criminal justice system to pose questions to them about their operating arrangements and to facilitate information-sharing between the agencies. In May, I was also involved in an additional meeting of the LCJB at which my office proposed the idea of convening a local criminal justice system group specifically focused on Covid 19 recovery issues. This group will be meeting in June and will provide a forum for criminal justice agencies to collaborate and work towards local recovery.

At the West Midlands regional level, I have been actively involved in criminal justice system recovery issues through the Regional Criminal Justice Forum and my office continues to collect and collate data on criminal justice performance from a range of agencies to better inform the recovery response and planning.

At the national level, I have been actively involved in discussions on the impact of Covid 19 on the criminal justice through regular calls with the Policing Minister and with other PCCs across the country. This forum has provided me with an opportunity to pose questions and advocate on local issues, such as the potential usage of Nuneaton courts as a way of addressing the backlog of cases.

## **6. Grants.**

A total of £2.25 million has now been awarded for 2020/21 to organisations in support of the objectives of my Police and Crime Plan, in order to keep communities safe and protect some of the most vulnerable in society.

Of this sum, £1,055,814 has been distributed to projects through the Commissioner's Grants Scheme, with funding confirmed more than a month earlier than usual in order to ensure financial support is readily in place for organisations supporting the most vulnerable through the current Covid-19 emergency. My office has worked extremely hard during this period to finalise these

grants and ensure that charities and community organisations across Warwickshire have the resources they need from us to continue their vital work.

My office has also been in contact with all the recipients to understand how their plans might have changed and whether further support may be needed. It is critical that those organisations working with the most vulnerable in society can continue their work at this time when it is now needed more than ever.

Projects to help victims of domestic abuse and their families have received the largest share of the funding pot, in recognition of the increases of this type of crime that the lockdown period is expected to generate. Schemes to improve the safety of the county's roads also feature heavily, in line with my ambition to reduce the numbers of people killed and serious injured in collisions each year.

These grants come in addition to the more than £1.2 million of funding that I invest each year in directly commissioned services to support victims of crime. These include domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child exploitation, and substance misuse services for adults and children.

In principal grants have also been provided to enable the continued work and employment of the county's Cyber Crime Advisors, Rural Crime Coordinators, Cyber Trading Standards Officers and Business Crime Advisor.

Funding for a small number of further applications will be finalised in the coming weeks, including the core grants for the county's four Community Safety Partnerships

A full list of all the grants-awarded projects for this year can be found at: -

[www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/grants-awarded-2020-21/](http://www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/grants-awarded-2020-21/)

- **Emergency Funding.**

A total of £192,000 has been awarded by the Ministry of Justice for schemes in Warwickshire to provide additional funding for services supporting victims through the Covid-19 emergency, following application by the OPCC. The deadline for applications was the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and my office are currently in the process of assessing and progressing the applications received.

This funding stream has been available in anticipation of an increase in victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence arising out of the impact of Covid 19. It covers the period to the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 and has been provided to meet the additional costs organisations are incurring whilst adapting their services during the pandemic and to cope with the anticipated increased demand.

## **7. Performance.**

It should be remembered that this Covid 19 is principally a public health emergency, it is not a policing crisis. Nonetheless, Covid 19 presents many challenges to Warwickshire Police and to the continued delivery of the priorities and ambitions of my Police and Crime Plan.

I have been keeping in regular contact with the Chief Constable and senior officers at Warwickshire Police and I can reassure the public that the force are working well with all of the other agencies to co-ordinate their response to the pandemic with a focus on keeping all parts of the community safe, especially those who are considered to be most vulnerable.

I have a responsibility to 'hold to account' the Chief Constable for the performance of the force and I have continued to do so throughout the Covid 19 emergency. This has principally been through the formal monthly 'Performance Accountability Meetings' (PAM) where a 'deep-dive' subject is selected for each meeting to provide additional scrutiny on a topic of particular interest or concern. To date these have been: -

- January - Non-emergency 101 performance.
- February - Investigations.
- March - Victim Services.
- April - Covid 19 public FAQs.
- May - Serious and Organised Crime.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> June - Criminal Justice.

The principal documents associated with the last PAM held on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 are attached for the PCP's attention: -

- Appendix B - Warwickshire Police Performance Summary April 2020.
- Appendix C - OPCC Force Performance Scrutiny April 2020.
- Appendix D - PAM minutes 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 a virtual meeting was held of the Police and Crime Panel - Planning and Performance Group, at which the OPCC were represented by the Chief Executive Officer and the Development and Police Lead for Scrutiny and Performance.

#### **8. Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).**

I am pleased to announce that since my last report to the PCP, Richard Long (a retired Superintendent with Warwickshire Police and the former lead for the force on Strategic Vulnerability) is now in post with the OPCC and takes on the Vulnerability portfolio.

#### **9. Formal Decisions.**

In recognition of Warwickshire Police becoming a stand-alone force following the termination of the alliance with West Mercia Police, a revised 'Decision Making Process' policy has been produced that can be found on the OPCC website at: -

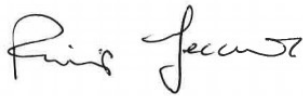
<https://www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Decision-Making-Process-April-2020.pdf?x73802>

I have made the following decisions since my last report to the PCP on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020: -



OFFICIAL

- WPCC20123 - Complaint Review Manager.
- WPCC20124 - Exempt S31 – Crime and Disorder.
- WPCC20125 - Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21.
- WPCC20126 - Exempt S43 Commercial Interest.
- WPCC20127 - Dog Section Void Premises.
- WPCC20128 - Amendment to Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20.
- WPCC20129 - Scheme of Delegation.
- WPCC20130 - Warwickshire and West Mercia Settlement Agreement.
- WPCC20131 - Section 22 Agreement ICT and Digital Services.
- WPCC20132 - Section 22 Agreement Transactional Services.
- WPCC 20133 - Corporate Governance Framework 202/21.
- WPCC20134 - Exempt S31 – Policing Strategy.
- WPCC20135 - Commissioners Grant 2020/21.
- WPCC20136 - Covid 19 Costs.
- WPCC20137 - Awaiting completion
- WPCC20138 - Exempt S43 Commercial Interest.



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