



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



## **MONTHLY UPDATE**

***The latest news from the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner***

**December 2018**

It's been another busy month since the last newsletter, with more progress being made on shaping the future of Warwickshire Police once the alliance with West Mercia Police ends next October. The force's planning team has been continuing to work up options for the future, principally looking to establish what a standalone Warwickshire Police might look like, in order to establish a baseline to assess all other options.

This work is progressing well and should allow myself and Chief Officers to consider more detailed proposals in the New Year, so that we can more properly establish the areas of business that we may wish to do ourselves, alongside others where we might wish to continue some form of collaboration or shared service, including with West Mercia.

In the meantime we continue to have discussions with our counterparts on the full exit strategy, which are ongoing as I write. However, we have been able to reach positive agreement in recent weeks to separate out the budgets for local policing for each force, meaning that functions such as patrol policing, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, crime investigation and roads policing revert to local control from the next financial year onwards. Previously these budgets were pooled but from April they will be fully under each respective force's control.

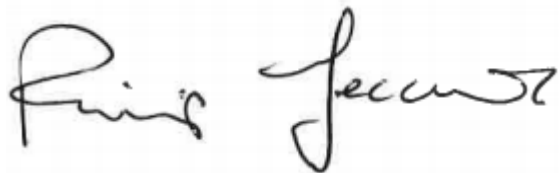
This agreement is good news, as it means that around 55% of the budget for Warwickshire can now be planned for with certainty, regardless of the ending of the alliance. This allows me to ensure that the funding I am able to give to the Chief Constable for local policing across Warwickshire can be protected and indeed enhanced.

I have been very clear from the very beginning of my term of office that I regard Safer Neighbourhood Teams as the bedrock of policing in Warwickshire and this will continue to be the case, whatever the future direction of the force may be once the alliance ends next October.

So, while there are a certain amount of unknowns going into 2019, I think there is cause for optimism and we will be able to build a reinvigorated Warwickshire Police which can deliver an improved service to the public. It won't be easy and there will be hurdles to overcome along the way, but I do think that with our exceptional workforce of officers and staff we will emerge stronger from the difficult situation which has been forced upon us all.

Of course, those very same officers and police staff are about to head into one of the busiest weekends of the year, as the festive season gets into full swing. While many of us will be fortunate to enjoy a break over the Christmas period, policing remains a 24/7 service and for the many officers, PCSOs and police staff in our control room, there will be no respite. It is thanks to their extraordinary efforts that we will all hopefully enjoy a safe and pleasant few days and I am sure you will wish to join me in passing on your thanks to them.

On which note I will end, wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Seccombe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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



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**Your views needed on my budget plans**

As I begin the process of setting next year's budget, I have been extremely keen to ensure that the pressures on the workforce of Warwickshire Police are acknowledged and acted upon. Good progress is now being made on the promise to recruit the 50 police officers that I pledged to pay for with last year's precept rise, with the recent sustained marketing campaign bearing fruit and many more applications now being received.

## **POLICE PRECEPT 2019/20**

**HOW MUCH EXTRA ARE YOU WILLING TO PAY  
TO SUPPORT POLICING IN WARWICKSHIRE?**

Meanwhile, new recruits are already going through their training and will be ready to begin their duties in the coming months, while the force will also receive a number of transferees from other forces as well, bringing a range of different experiences.

This is positive news but I know that this will not fully make the visible difference that you and I want to see. That's why I've begun consulting this month on plans to boost police officer numbers even further.

The Government has provided some welcome additional funding for policing this year, but this alone will not deliver enough resources to be able to make the substantial increase in officer numbers that I believe is required, nor would it fully allow for the investments in IT, equipment and estates that are badly needed in order to improve the quality of service given the public.

Doing nothing to change this situation is not an option that in my view is either sustainable or desirable, so this year I have outlined proposals to increase the portion of Council Tax by up to £2 a month, £1.50 a month or £1 a month on average, in order to provide the Chief Constable with the resources he needs.

While these increases are based on an average Band D taxpayer, in reality, many people would see a smaller increase, with those Warwickshire residents living in Council Tax bands A to C paying proportionately less per month. However, I understand that any proposals to raise Council Tax cause concern, so I am very keen to get the public's views on which of these options is the most preferable.

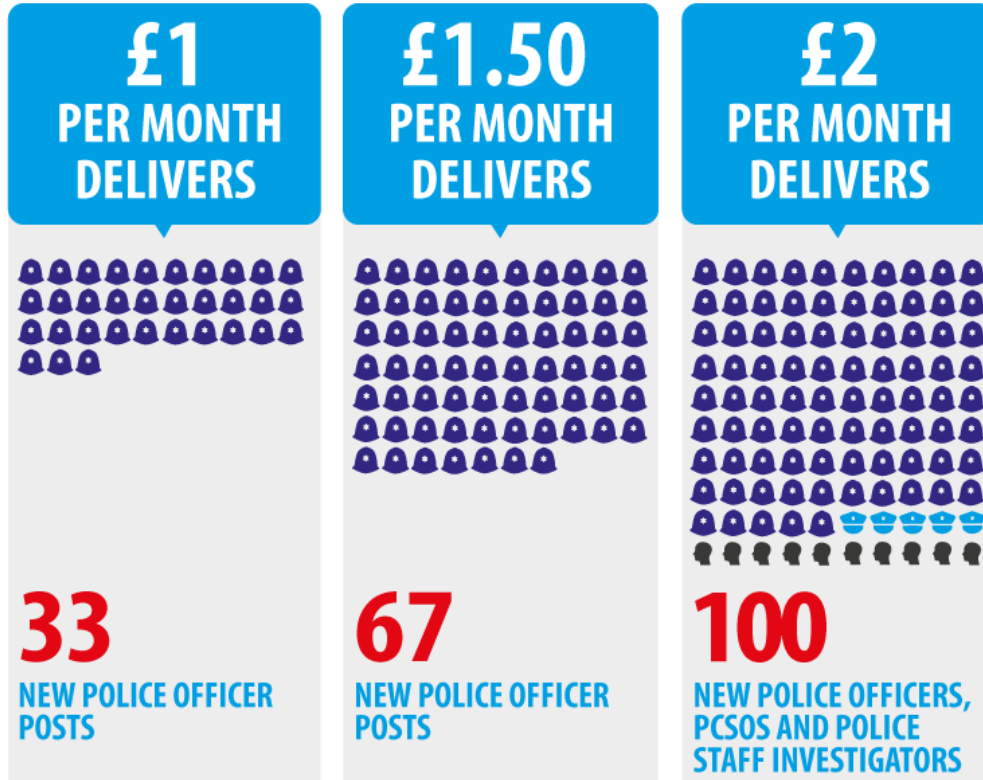
Your opinions will help influence my final decision on next year's budget and I hope to hear from the widest possible number of you through the consultation survey.

You can give your feedback by clicking the button below to go to the online survey. It will be open until Thursday, January 24, 2019. See the infographic below for more on what the increases will mean in terms of extra officer numbers for Warwickshire.

**Take the survey**

# HOW MUCH EXTRA ARE YOU WILLING TO PAY TO SUPPORT POLICING IN WARWICKSHIRE?

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## Business views are needed too!

I am also holding a special event for businesses to give their feedback on the proposals. It will be held at 2pm on Thursday 10 January at the Northgate House Conference Centre in Warwick. Representatives of local businesses interested in attending should contact my office on 01926 412322 or email [opcc@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:opcc@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk).

## Grants scheme opens for new applications

Community projects, crime-reduction initiatives, victims' support services and non-profit groups are set for a cash injection from my Commissioner's Grants Scheme, which is re-opening across two categories for

Commissioner's Grant Scheme

Apply now!

new applications for the coming financial year.

Through the grants I'm hoping to fund a range of initiatives which support the ambitions of his Police and Crime Plan. Two pots of funding are being made available:

- a small grants scheme of up to £10,000
- A reducing reoffending grants scheme for up to £15,000.

Applications are welcome from both established and new non-profit service providers who will deliver projects that address the key objectives of the Police and Crime Plan.

My grants scheme has been operating for a number of years, delivering great outcomes for victims of crime, providing advice and support services and contributing to a reduction in reoffending, all of which support the vital work of Warwickshire Police.

By channelling resources towards the right projects and initiatives, I can make a real difference to local communities, so I am keen to receive new applications for funding for 2019/20. I hope to be able to provide a great New Year 'present' for a range of initiatives which can create a safer and more secure Warwickshire for everyone, so do get your applications in before the deadline closes at noon on Thursday 24 January, 2019.

For more information and details of how to apply, visit our [2019/20 Commissioner's Grant Scheme](#) page.

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## Report highlights mental health strain on policing

A report by the police inspectorate warns that police officers are increasingly being used as the service of default in responding to people with mental health problems.

The review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) expressed clear concerns over whether the police should be involved in responding to mental health problems but found that, when they did so, officers were "supportive, considerate and compassionate".

I think the report highlights in stark terms the significant demand that mental health places on the police, who are most often not the most appropriate agency to respond. People





experiencing a mental health crisis need expert support from medical professionals but at the moment this is often not available, so as a 24/7 emergency service, the police are left to pick up the pieces. This contributes further to the demand on officers – who are not trained mental health professionals – and diverts resources away from frontline policing activity.

I support the inspectorate's calls for a fundamental rethink on mental health provision but I am also pleased to see the acknowledgement in the report of the good leadership and governance shown in this area by the police service.

Improving the situation here in Warwickshire is something that I and the Chief Constable have been working hard on for some time and an enhanced triage system, which would see mental health professionals working with closely with Warwickshire Police, is close to finalisation. This will be a positive step to assisting officers when they do encounter people with mental health difficulties, to ensure that the correct support and provision can be made.

Equally, I have been encouraged by the willingness of the Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust to join the county's Blue Light Emergency Services Collaboration Board alongside police, fire, ambulance and County Council colleagues, so we can explore further options for working more closely together.

The Government's recent announcement of increased investment in mental health support services is also very welcome news. I hope this will play its part in reducing the unsustainable demand currently being placed on the police service by ensuring that people in mental health difficulties receive appropriate early interventions to prevent them from ever reaching a crisis point.

- [Read the HMICFRS report: 'Policing and Mental Health: Picking up the Pieces'](#)

## **Bourton and Draycote the latest 'Supported Villages'**

Working with the Bourton Trust, the villages of Draycote and Bourton near Rugby have become the latest rural communities in the north of the county to join a crime prevention initiative.

By gaining 'Supported Village' status, villagers are demonstrating that their

community is not a soft touch for rural crime, with households being offered advice on how to protect themselves against crime and working with local officers to mark their property.



The Supported Villages programme, part of the Rural Crime Project which I

fund, aims to help communities with proactive crime prevention action and advice, providing a sustainable scheme which can then be maintained by the community.

The Bourton Trust has been working with Carol Cotterill, Rural Crime Office, and the Rugby Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, especially PCSO Kam Shilton, PCSO Helena Seal and PC Andy Crouch on the project. A property marking evening was held where villagers were invited to bring items to be marked and get crime prevention advice. 'Thieves Beware' signs are also now at both village gateways stating that you are entering a village where property is marked.

To mark the new 'Supported Village' status, both villages were presented with a crime prevention toolbox and a community box by Inspector Karen Jones and Sgt Sarah Masters from Warwickshire Police. Both boxes provide information and equipment for the nominated village contacts (Tony Mather in Draycote and Robert Jack in Bourton) to support local residents with further property marking and crime prevention in the future.

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## Rural crime meeting in North Warwickshire

Crime affecting businesses, farms and communities in rural areas were top of the agenda at the annual meeting between police, partners and the local community across North Warwickshire.

Farmers, horse owners and rural business people gathered at Kingsbury Water Park on at the end of November to meet with myself and representatives of Warwickshire Police and partner organisations, including the NFU, Warwickshire Trading Standards, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Fire & Rescue and Warwickshire Horse Watch.



As well as local beat officers attending with the force's Crime Prevention Officer, Mark English, the evening was also supported by the Inspector for the area, Dave Williams. My Business Crime Advisor, Bogdan Fironda, was also on hand to provide advice and guidance to rural business on how to better protect themselves from offences including theft, fraud and cyber-crime.

I was really pleased to see a good turn-out of people at the event as it is vital that rural communities have the chance to engage with the police and partner agencies, raise issues

and have access to all of the advice and support that is available.

I'd like to thank all of the partner agencies who came to the evening for their time and commitment to tackling crime in our rural areas. By focusing on what we can all do to make life more difficult for criminals, we can help reinforce the message that Warwickshire's rural communities are not a soft spot for criminals to exploit.

To receive alerts on incidents and crime prevention advice on a range of subjects go to the dedicated rural website: [www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk](http://www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk). Rural businesses can receive similar advice and guidance at [www.warwickshirebusinesswatch.co.uk](http://www.warwickshirebusinesswatch.co.uk).

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## Diary dates

Here are some of the key events in my diary for the next few weeks:

**Jan 2:** Meeting with new Cyber Crime Advisors, OPCC offices

**Jan 3:** Meeting with Mark Pawsey MP, OPCC offices

**Jan 4:** Meeting with Craig Tracey MP, Atherstone

**Jan 9:** Precept consultation meeting with police staff associations, Barford

**Jan 10:** Precept consultation meeting with the business community, 2pm, Northgate House Conference Centre, Warwick. Contact 01926 412322 or email [opcc@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:opcc@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk) if you wish to register your attendance.

**Jan 11:** Blue Light Collaboration Joint Advisory Board, Warwick

**Jan 15:** Citizens' Academy Graduation Evening, Warwick

**Jan 16:** Alliance Governance Group, Hindlip

**Jan 17:** Seminar on tackling serious violence, Birmingham

**Jan 18:** Precept consultation meeting for county MPs, Leek Wootton

**Jan 21:** Join Audit and Standards Committee, Hindlip

**Jan 22:** Police Officer confirmation ceremony, Warwick

**Jan 24:** Police and Crime Panel Budget briefing, Warwick

