

Monthly update from Warwickshire's Police and Crime Commissioner

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Philip Secombe
Police and Crime
Commissioner
for Warwickshire



MONTHLY UPDATE

The latest news from the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner

September 2019

As we reach the end of September, there has been much focus on the future of Warwickshire Police, with the alliance with West Mercia Police due to end in just over a week's time. It's worth remembering that the decision to end the alliance was one taken unilaterally by the West Mercia Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner and was not one which we in Warwickshire either expected or supported. However, the decision has been made and my major motivation since we received the termination notification has been to secure the future of Warwickshire Police and ensure it continues to operate to a very high standard after the alliance ends.

It has been Warwickshire's position from the outset that we as we transitioned the joint services to their single-force future states we would do nothing to undermine the operational effectiveness of the two forces. Discussions have been taking place over the past 12 months with West Mercia in order to secure the process to deliver that smooth transition. While these talks have been very challenging at times, the two Chief Constables signed a statement of intent in August to find an amicable and negotiated solution which would also mean that, while the negotiations about transitioning are ongoing, there would be nothing done which would put public safety at risk.

As a result, Chief Constable Martin Jelley and I are confident that, whatever the outcome of our continued talks with West Mercia, the public will continue to receive their normal service from Warwickshire Police once the alliance



comes to an end. Some of the shared services will be ready to transition in October, while others such as our joint IT systems will take longer to separate due to their complexity. So what is changing and what is staying the same? Our change programme called 'Evolve' has been very carefully considered to ensure that Warwickshire Police has a strong and sustainable future.

Locally controlled and delivered policing functions

To our communities, policing in Warwickshire will look and feel the same as it does now. Local policing services, including our safer neighbourhood teams, roads policing, patrol and local investigation teams, are today already under the command and control of Warwickshire and will continue to operate in the same way.

Rebuilding local supporting functions

Around 80 percent of the alliance shared supporting services, such as criminal justice, specialist policing services and our enabling and financial services, are currently based within West Mercia and this is what will be changing. While many of these services will return to being based within Warwickshire we are also establishing some new collaborative working arrangements to reap the benefits of shared service delivery. Warwickshire has

always been one of the smallest forces in the country and has always worked with partners to provide the services needed to keep people safe.

Operational Control and Command (OCC)

Warwickshire Police's Operational Control and Command (OCC) centre is the heartbeat of our force. From 9 October the OCC will take back control of our policing area and will be integral to local policing in Warwickshire; controlling our county's motorways and road network and providing critical incident, firearms command and intelligence support. We have carried out significant recruitment within our OCC; including additional Inspectors to manage the control room and firearms incidents, supervisors to manage the control room and controllers to manage motorways.

Increased officers to serve our county

The investments made in new officers over the past 18 months mean that by the end of the financial year we will have over 970 officers in Warwickshire, the strongest position the force has seen for many years. Together with the additional police recruitment announced by the Government, over the next three years we will be exceeding the largest officer numbers in the force's long history. We are therefore very confident that Warwickshire residents are already seeing the positive visible difference in policing across the county and will continue to do so as our numbers increase further.

Exciting new collaborations

Warwickshire Police is one of the smallest forces in the country and has always worked with partners to provide the services needed to keep people safe. Being a small force comes with great opportunities to work with a wide range of partners while maintaining all the benefits of localism. We are now focused on implementing strong and positive arrangements, which balance local governance and accountability, with collaborative partnerships, to deliver the best possible protection to people in our county.



We firmly believe that our new arrangements will give the best balance between having policing resources based in Warwickshire under the direction and control of the Chief Constable; addressing the priorities our communities tell us are most important, alongside the financial benefits

associated with collaboration.

The plans we are now implementing will ensure much more local accountability and flexibility to service needs of the people in Warwickshire, and build on the strengths Warwickshire Police has enjoyed across its 162-year history.

While the final details of the discussions with West Mercia are not yet fully concluded, both Chief Constable Martin Jelley and I are fully confident that the due diligence that has gone into redesigning Warwickshire Police will ensure the public of Warwickshire continue to receive an excellent police service going forwards.

Philip Seccombe TD
Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Making Warwickshire a leader in road safety



Far too many people are killed or seriously injured on our roads in Warwickshire and we need to encourage a major shift in attitudes among all of our road users to bring these numbers down. The scale of the issue is stark; last year there were 35 people killed on Warwickshire's roads and another 320 people were seriously injured.

That's why I launched my Road Safety Fund to help encourage new and innovative schemes which can help ensure that our county is as safe as it can be for all road users and pedestrians.

More than £300,000 of funding will initially support 11 projects across the county, all carefully selected to support some of the most vulnerable road users. Among them are some pioneering national organisations, with leading road safety charities being awarded alongside local road safety partners.

Dozens of applications were received when the Road Safety Fund opened in June and the successful projects include schemes aimed at drivers, young people, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists. A mix of prevention, education and enforcement activities are being supported, building upon established best practice in Warwickshire and elsewhere.

I want Warwickshire to really lead the way nationally on road safety, so I have been pleased by the positive way our partners have responded to the launch of the Road Safety Fund. This is just the start of the journey to make our highways and byways truly safe, however, and I will be continuing to champion the cause strongly.

Among those being supported is The Honest Truth, which will help learner drivers get an early education in road safety as part of their driving lessons. The information will be delivered in collaboration with Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs), who will use unique but simple and striking visuals to deliver the safety messages to their pupils during their driving lessons.

Although many new drivers are still in further or higher education, reaching and engaging with this vulnerable group in effective road safety education is a challenge. The main 'touch-point' for all but a few new drivers are ADIs. Learners and ADIs spend around 40 hours together during the process of learning to drive. Typically, lessons are two hours and undertaken weekly; during this time learners often develop a strong bond with their instructor and reach out to them for information and advice on things like choosing a first car and buying insurance.



Statistical evidence shows that the majority of collisions involving new and young drivers which result in death or serious injury aren't as a result of poor driving skill. In other words, the mirror-signal-manoeuve technical skills taught by ADIs and required to pass a driving test aren't so much of an issue as the lack of decision-making skills and understanding of the dangers faced by new drivers. The Honest Truth campaign aims to address this and

help to make young drivers aware of the risks when they start to drive alone.

Additionally, an outdoor campaign focusing on risky driving behaviours of drink driving and using a mobile phone will be seen across Warwickshire area during the winter period.

Elsewhere, speeding drivers are set to have the brakes put on them thanks to a grant to North Warwickshire Borough Council. A bid to help extend Community Speed Watch schemes across the borough has been approved, meaning six new speed monitoring devices can be purchased for use by local community speed watch schemes.

New schemes are under developed in the villages of Austrey, Ansley Common, Ansley Village, Arley, Baxterley, Birchley Heath, Hartshill, Kingsbury, Mancetter, Maxstoke, Ridge Lane, Shustoke and Water Orton.

For details of all of the funded schemes, visit: www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/commissioner-funds-innovative-schemes-to-make-warwickshires-roads-safer/



Pictured at Nether Whitacre is Community Speedwatch volunteer Carol Wallace (behind the speed camera), with, from left to right: PC Simon Ackroyd, Speedwatch co-ordinator Bev Woollaston, Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Seccombe, Cllr David Reilly, PC Andy Timmins and Community Speedwatch volunteers Arthur Harris and Steve Collins.

Lime Tree Village latest to join anti-crime scheme



Lime Tree Village in Dunchurch near Rugby has become the latest community to join the Warwickshire Supported Villages Scheme.

By gaining 'Supported Village' status, residents are demonstrating that their community is not a soft touch for rural crime. Under the scheme, which I fund through the Rural Crime Project, residents are provided with advice on how to protect themselves against crime and work with local officers to mark their

property.

Lime Tree Village has been working with Carol Cotterill, Rural Crime Officer, Rugby Neighbourhood Watch and the Rugby Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, especially PCSO David Banks on the project.

Crime prevention events have been held for residents at the retirement village, where there has been a talk by various organisations on crime prevention and an event with information and advice. 'Thieves Beware' signs are also now at the village gateways stating that you are entering an area where property is marked.

To mark the new 'Supported Village' status, I present a crime prevention toolbox and a community box was presented to David Rankin, the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator. Both boxes provide information and equipment for the village to use to support local residents with further property marking and crime prevention in the future.

Pictured from left are: PCSO Jon Townsend, David Rankin, Patrick Johnson, Carol Cotterill, Sean Corney, Edward Palusinski, Philip Seccombe and PCSO David Banks.

Warwickshire Police inspection report published

Last week saw the publication of the latest [Warwickshire Police inspection report](#) by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

It comes as part of the annual PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) programme of assessment and follows visits to the force by the inspectors in March and July.

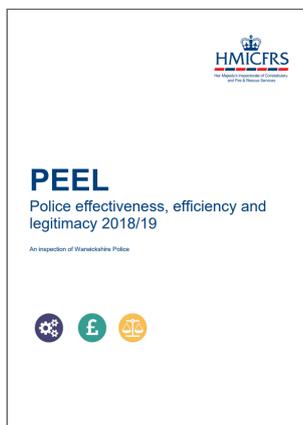
The report confirms that Warwickshire Police is good at reducing crime and keeping people safe, good at how it treats the public and its workforce but the extent to which the force operates efficiently and sustainably requires improvement.

First and foremost I welcome the view of HMICFRS that Warwickshire Police is good at preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour, understanding community issues and working with other agencies to resolve local problems. This is something that our residents are rightly very concerned about, so I am pleased that the work the force and my office have been undertaking to improve these areas of work have been recognised independently.

Equally, the force has a mission statement of protecting people from harm and aims to be great at protecting the most vulnerable in society. This inspection report recognises the improvements that have been made in this area and praises the way it works closely with partners to safeguard victims.

However, the report also makes clear the very difficult circumstances the force has been placed into over the past 11 months. As I outlined at the beginning of this newsletter, the backdrop of the decision to end the alliance been extremely challenging. It was not something Warwickshire Police had expected, so it has taken months of detailed planning work to ensure that the force moves forward in the best possible way.

The report is based on the visit that the inspectors made back in March and July, so



their concerns reflect their assessment of the force's position at that time. In the months since then, there has been significant progress in the force's planning and in the discussions with West Mercia and I therefore believe that the picture is now very different, as I explained in the introduction. I am therefore confident that we will be able to address the concerns the inspectors rightly raised as we move into our post-alliance state.

Elsewhere, the report also highlighted concerns with the way in which the force investigates crime, with capacity and capability issues meaning that some crimes take too long to bring to an outcome.

The rising levels of demand have placed a strain on the force's capacity to investigate some types of crime, alongside a shortage of experienced detectives, something that all forces nationally have faced. There are also issues within the wider criminal justice system which have a negative impact on the police's ability to progress investigations to court speedily. My office has done considerable work to examine the underlying issues and I have raised my concerns with the Chief Constable and other criminal justice agencies that victims are waiting too long for an outcome. As a result, I know that there has been work to address these issues within the new policing model.

In addition, I have financed the use of experienced police staff investigators to bolster the capacity of the force to investigate crime, while the investments I have made in new police officers over the past year, means that the force is now in a better position to release experienced officers into investigative roles. By the year end there will be around 170 more officers in Warwickshire, while will include transferees from other forces alongside newly trained detectives.

I am confident that the force understands the areas that needs to improve and is putting in plans to address this. My office will continue to monitor closely the progress that is made, as it will be vital to ensuring an improved service to the public.

Diary dates

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

- Oct 3:** Meeting with new head of Professional Standards Department, Stratford
- Oct 3:** 'We stand together' event, Rugby
- Oct 7:** Rural Crime Team launch. Leek Wootton
- Oct 9:** Water Orton Parish Council
- Oct 11:** Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership Strategic Board
- Oct 14:** High Sheriff's Legal Service, St Mary's Church, Warwick
- Oct 16-17:** Association of Police and Crime Commissioners' General Meeting, Ryton-on-Dunsmore
- Oct 18:** Regional Policing Governance Group, Birmingham
- Oct 19:** Cake Not Hate Event, Spa Centre, Leamington Spa
- Oct 25:** Blue Light Collaboration Joint Advisory Board, Warwick

