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No more police officer cuts in Warwickshire, vows PCC

By [Dan Santy](#) Monday 11 February 2013 Updated: 13/02 15:35



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WARWICKSHIRE Police will not lose any more officers.

Police and Crime Commissioner Ron Ball made the promise as he revealed to The Observer his ambitious plan for policing in the county over the coming years.

Mr Ball, the shock winner of Warwickshire's maiden PCC election in November, admits he was surprised to be elected as an independent candidate and has been settling into the role with a calendar full of meetings and report reading.

He has now released his draft Police and Crime Plan for the years up to 2017, setting out the direction he wants to take during his five year term.

As part of this he has pledged not to cut any more police officers or community support officers and wants to launch the biggest recruitment drive for volunteer constables ever seen in Warwickshire.

Speaking to the Observer, he said: "The way things are looking, I can say there is no need to cut any more uniformed officers.

"The reduction in the number of officers and PCSOs has gone far enough and I want to see their numbers maintained."

His pledge comes despite Warwickshire Police still having to make £11 million of savings by 2016.

Bidford resident Mr Ball wants to keep officer numbers at 804 and PCSOs at 117 while increasing the number of volunteer officers - special constables - from 264 to 410.

As part of his focus on volunteering, he is also keen to see the role of Neighbourhood Watch schemes grow by encouraging the appointment of spokespeople to be the voices of their communities to him and the police.

One of the ways Warwickshire has already set about tackling its budget cuts is to team up with West Mercia in a Strategic Alliance - the first of its kind seen in the country.

The two forces are sharing staff and resources - saving them £30 million - across a range of areas including forensics, estate management and firearms.

This, according to Mr Ball, is why he has been able to look to the future without having to cut officer numbers, although he admits more back office jobs will be lost.

"It really is win win for both forces. Back office job cuts are unfortunately some of the pain that has to be gone through, but that was inevitable really," he said.

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"My personal view of austerity is that, of course it's going to be painful, but you do get some beneficial effects from it. It makes people focus better on using what they've got, whereas when there is a lot of money around sometimes it gets wasted."

Now in the job for three months, Mr Ball said he had settled in quickly and was enjoying a good relationship with Warwickshire's Chief Constable, Andy Parker, despite commissioners in other areas not getting off to such smooth starts.

"At the moment I'm having lots of meetings or reading reports. What I'm not yet doing, which I want to, is to get out and about meeting people, businesses and organisations to see what they want.

"The Police Authority before me was doing a good job, so I've just been looking at where we are and where we need to go from here.

"It took some really tough decisions but managed to keep the force effective on a tight budget. I want to build on this."

Mr Ball's first budget as commissioner will be unveiled in the coming weeks.

Visit www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk to read his draft Police and Crime Plan for 2013-2017.

No more cuts will be made to frontline policing in Warwickshire in the coming years says Ron Ball. (s)

Warwickshire Police Commissioner Ron Ball said he and Warwickshire Chief Constable Andy Parker had got off to a good start. (s)

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