

Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Report of the Chairman of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel

To Staffordshire County Council

In accordance with agreed practice I am reporting on matters dealt with by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel at its meeting on Monday 15 July 2019.

The main items considered were:

Police Establishment Numbers - When supporting the Commissioner's Precept for 2018/19 and 2019/20 the Panel had particularly noted that part of the increase would be to fund additional Police Officer posts. The Commissioner had stated his intention to recruit an additional 69 Officers over that 2 year period, The Panel have sought evidence that those posts have been created.

A workshop on Police Establishment numbers was held in April, following which Members asked for more clarification on those numbers as they differed from statistics recorded by the Home Office. A further Briefing Note was submitted to this Panel meeting.

Lengthy discussion took place on the way in which Establishment numbers were calculated and the need to identify a base figure from which any increase in Establishment could be clearly calculated. The Commissioner was keen to explain that the changing nature of crime (eg Cyber crime, CSE) had changed the skills and expertise required of the core Force. This in turn affected the allocation of funding for staff however the Commissioner gave assurances that the increased number of Police Officers were being recruited.

The Panel will continue to monitor this issue.

Commissioner's Annual Report 2018/19 - One of the Panel's statutory duties is to 'consider and make comment on' the Commissioner's Annual Report on the progress of delivery of his Police and Crime Plan.' (For Staffordshire this is the Safer, Fairer, United Communities Strategy). The Panel's views on the Annual Report have to be forwarded to the Commissioner and published on the Panel's website.

The main points covered in the Panel's feedback include:

- Acknowledgement of the success of the SPACE scheme, with 2018 attendances reported to be 30,000 with a 41% reduction in Anti Social Behaviour during the period when the scheme is in operation. Panel members commented on the dependence of the scheme on a Partnership approach.
- The development of a scheme to improve offenders' access to the Labour Market. The Commissioner reported the intended commissioning of a new service in 2019 aimed at offering employment opportunities in the construction

sector, for offenders. He also reported his views on the need for Prison Service reform to give emphasis to rehabilitation and prevention of re-offending

- The Panels' interest in the work of 'Catch 22' a social, not for profit business, delivering support for victims of CSE and children who go missing. In 2018/19 3,126 reports were received of children missing from home/care, involving 1,421 children. The Commissioner reported on multi agency work on addressing this issue both within the UK and beyond. In addition, Catch 22 had received 365 referrals for children requiring support around CSE.

IT Transformation – Boeing Contract -The Commissioner/Staffordshire Police have a contract with Boeing UK for the delivery of IT Transformation projects over a 10 year period at an originally reported contract price of around £100m. Panel had asked for an update on the contract as it has been in operation for 3 years.

The Commissioner reported that to date Boeing's main focus had been on the delivery of the Niche integrated records management system which would replace 12 core systems which had been in use over the past 8-20 years. Originally savings of £0.5m -£1m per annum had been predicted from updating IT capability however the Commissioner explained that any savings were affected by the level of demand for that IT. The wider the roll out of the technology, the more cost. The roll out and costs were considered as part of the normal budget allocation processes.

Review of the Police Estate – In his update on collaboration between the Police and Fire and Rescue Services, the Commissioner reported that as part of the rationalisation of the Police Estate 8 police service buildings were currently being marketed for sale. Panel members quoted differing experiences of alternative arrangements for public access to the Police Service following the closure of Stations, with effective arrangements reported for Newcastle under Lyme whilst concern was expressed at the absence of alternative provision in the Cannock area.

Fire and Rescue Corporate Safety Plan – Progress on the delivery of projects under the Corporate Safety Plan was reported with the Commissioner making particular reference to his intention to build on the successful Safe and Well initiative via collaboration between the Police and Fire and Rescue Services. Responding to a question on staffing levels the Commissioner acknowledged the challenges in recruiting adequate numbers of Retained Firefighters and stressed his determination to secure appropriate cover across the County.

Fire and Rescue Plan – Interim Plan for 2019/20 - As the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Commissioner is required to produce and issue a Fire and Rescue Plan setting out the strategic vision, priorities and objectives for the Service shortly after taking office. As the Commissioner did not intend to seek re-election in May 2020, he submitted a draft Interim Plan for comment. He explained that its temporary nature would allow any successor to align that Plan with the Corporate Safety Plan

and the Integrated Risk Management Plan both of which had to be produced for the period 2020-24.

Other matters discussed at the meeting:

- County Councillor Robinson presented a 'public question' asking the Commissioner to meet with community representatives for the Kidsgrove, Butt Lane, Talke area to discuss policing levels in the area and concerns at increased criminal activity and anti-social behaviour. Mr Robinson also presented a petition to the Commissioner opposing the closure of Kidsgrove Police Station
- The Annual Report on the use of the Home Office grant towards the running costs of the Panel (that Grant had been increased during 2018/19 to reflect the widened remit of the Panel to include the Fire and Rescue Service)
- The Annual Report on the handling of complaints against the Commissioner and his Deputy (None had been recorded)

For more information on these meetings or on the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in general please contact Julie Plant (01785 276135 e mail Julie.plant@staffordshire.gov.uk) or Helen Phillips (01785 276143 or helen.phillips@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Details of Panel meetings are issued to contact officers in each of the District/Borough Councils in the County and Stoke-on-Trent City Council for posting on their own web sites.

Stephen Sweeney

Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Chairman

Staffordshire County Council