

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Meeting held on 25 October 2021

Present: Bernard Peters (Chairman)

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| Adrian Bowen | Tony Holmes |
| Richard Cox (Vice-Chairman) | Philip Hudson |
| Stephen Doyle | Bryan Jones |
| Ann Edgeller | Roger Lees |
| Gill Heesom | Keith Walker |

Also in attendance: Ben Adams, Helen Fisher, Glynn Dixon, David Greensmith

Apologies: Lesley Adams

PART ONE

29. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

30. Minutes of the meetings held on 23 September and 12 October 2021

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Panel meetings held on the 23 September and 12 October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31. Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)

No decisions had been made since the last meeting.

32. Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public

The Panel considered the questions ask by a member of the public and presented their written report which contained their considered response.

RESOLVED: That the questions asked, and the Panels written response be noted.

33. Implementation of the reforms to the Police Misconduct & Complaints Regulations 2020

The report updated the Panel on the implementation of Police Misconduct and Complaints Reforms, as set out in the Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020 which came into place on 1 February 2020. The Staffordshire Commissioner became the Appropriate Authority for reviews (formally known as appeals). The Commissioner now receives all reviews unless they are about a senior officer, criminal or misconduct proceedings, or article 2/3 (Human Rights), the review body for these is the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

During the period 1 February 2020 and 31 December 2020, the Commissioner's office had received 52 reviews. 50 requests had been completed, 1 was withdrawn and 1 had been identified as the wrong review body and should have been sent to the IOPC. During the period 1 January 2021 and 30 September 2021, the Commissioner's office had received 49 reviews. 48 requests had been accepted for review, 1 was refused as out of time.

The report outlined the lessons learned from the reviews and also the findings of the Ethics and Transparency Audit Panel, who had conducted a thematic review of complaints.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the contents of the report.

34. Police and Crime Plan

The Commissioner updated the panel on the progress made in developing his Police and Crime Plan. He emphasised that there would be wide consultation with both partners and other bodies and that he was particularly interested in hearing from the public.

The Panel thanked Mr Adams for his presentation and after a number of questions the following information was noted:

- The consultation period was for 4 weeks. The panel were concerned that this was a short period of time for such an important document. It was explained that the consultation would be extensive and therefore hopefully effective.
- Hard to reach groups such as BME groups would be encouraged to comment on the plan, however, there was no intention as yet to translate the plan into other languages.
- All forms of social media would be used to reach as many people as possible. Paper copies would be available if needed.
- Young people were being encouraged to share their opinion. Schools and Colleges were part of the consultation programme.
- All Parish, District, County and City Councillors would be contacted.
- Road safety was in both the Police and Crime and Fire and Rescue plans as it was a significant issue in the County.
- Early intervention and clear expectations were needed with partners in order to reduce people entering the penal system and reduce reoffending.
- Delivery Plans would be developed to ensure that the priorities would be achieved. These would be performance monitored regularly and could be considered by the Panel when looking at the priorities in detail.
- Following a question on how process could be quickened, for example in the Courts system, it was explained that partnerships would need to work together to ensure that backlogs were cleared and more effective ways of working could be introduced for example, ensuring that all appropriate documents were available on time to ensure adjournments weren't required, or plea bargaining done in advance etc. The Commissioner felt that although he may not have control over a particular organisation, he could direct influence and could hopefully bring people together.

- It was acknowledged that some partnerships had not always worked effectively in the past and had not delivered on targets. The Commissioner felt that the right partnerships had to be established and this took time. Service demand also changed over time and being able to forge new relationships/agreements quickly was important.
- The Commissioners Plans would work alongside the Police force priority plans. The Police and Crim Plan would set out clear expectations with clear achievable targets.
- The new Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer had been engaged in the process of drawing up the draft plans.
- The aim was to reduce the number of crimes and it was acknowledged that this meant overall levels of crime and not simply reducing numbers in some areas by redirecting effort/resources leading to an increase in other types of crime or in other geographical areas.
- Witness and Victim Support Services would be delivered with a number of partners/agencies. New structures may be developed but the relationship with the Community Safety Partnerships would remain.
- The Commissioner agreed to look at a scheme previously introduced in Medway, to reduce the number of young people entering the penal system.
- Volunteers would be encouraged. There were currently a number on scrutiny panels, ETAP, custody suits, appropriate adults etc but this was looking to expand.
- Rural crime and trespass need to be included in the plan.

The Panel were reassured that the consultation would be comprehensive and wide ranging and a rolling conversation which would remain an open discussion supplemented by further surveys and questionnaires. However, they felt that four weeks may not be long enough particularly when consulting with partners who may not meet to consider responses on a frequent basis. Examples were given of a District Council whose meetings were every six weeks or a Parish Council which meets every two months. There was also concern that contacting young people maybe difficult when one week of the four was during half term.

The Panel asked to see the finalised version of the plan along with details of the number of responses received and a breakdown of gender, age, ethnicity, organisations etc. It was agreed to scrutinise the overall performance and each priority at future meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Commissioners Police and Crime Draft plan and consultation report be noted.

35. Fire and Rescue Plan

The Commissioner informed the Panel that the Draft Fire and Rescue Plan had much commonality with the previous plan but included new challenges such as changing legislation/regulations following Grenfell Tower and climate change and environmental threats such as flooding and fire.

The following issues were discussed:

- The Panel were reassured that the Priorities in the plan covered the areas they expected to see and ensured that new challenges such as responding to the Pandemic were still achievable.
- Why retained Fire Officers in the South of the County work out of the West Midland stations. It was explained that this was mainly due to calls being dealt with through the West Midlands control centre and officers were deployed from the closest and most available resource.
- Relationships with neighbouring authorities/bodies was essential and good practice, but a Staffordshire delivery approach and knowledge from local officers was invaluable.
- There may be a need to redesign jobs to meet the new challenges. The relationship with unions was strong and open discussions would take place to discuss terms and conditions if they needed to change.
- Local fire officers could be invited to local community meetings to offer advice and answer concerns particularly concerning prevention.

Following a question on Fire and Police vehicles carrying defibrillators, the panel were informed that the possibility of providing defibrillator equipment on response vehicles would be looked at.

RESOLVED: That the Commissioners Fire and Rescue Draft plan be noted.

36. Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members

No further questions were asked.

37. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

It was reported that an additional meeting had been arranged for 7 December 2021 to consider the MTFS reports.

RESOLVED – That the dates for future meetings be noted.

Chairman