

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Meeting held on 21 February 2023

Present:

Richard Cox (Vice-Chair)	Philip Hudson
Ann Edgeller	Bryan Jones
Gill Heesom	Keith Walker
Tony Holmes	

Also in attendance: Ben Adams, Louise Clayton, Victoria Farrar. Ross Irving (Vice Chair of Housing, Development and Growth O&S Committee Stoke on Trent City Council) Vincent Merrick (Substitute)

Apologies- Jackie Barnes, Adrian Bowen, Roger Lees, Dan Maycock and Bernard Peters. Bob Spencer (Chair of Safeguarding O&S Committee Staffordshire County Council). Shaun Bennett (Chair of Housing, Development and Growth O&S Committee Stoke on Trent City Council)

PART ONE

43. Declarations of interest

None were made at the meeting.

44. Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public

The Panel had been notified in advance of the meeting, of questions submitted by:

- Ms Mallender
- Mr Riley
- Mr Bradbury

The Panel considered the questions ask by members of the public and the written responses.

With the consent of the Chairman, Mr Riley was allowed to ask a supplementary question and asked if the detail provided in the Commissioners response on precept consultation results could be posted on the website?

The Commissioner responded that it was available on the website and that the detail on the consultation feedback was also provided to the Panel when they considered the precept increase.

Resolved: That the questions asked and the Commissioners responses be noted.

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

No decisions had been posted on the Commissioners website since the last meeting.

46. Police Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Legitimacy (PEEL) Governance report

The Commissioner introduced his report which outlined the processes in place to hold the Chief Constable to account for the improvements needed following the PEEL inspection in 2022. The panel were reminded that there had been a revisit by the HMICFRS in December 2022 which had focused on the progress against the causes of concern. The reinspection had found that improvements had been made but there was more to do.

The Panel were reminded that the Force had entered the 'engage' phase which enabled the force to be supported by HMICFRS and other national policing bodies and regularly share progress on areas of improvement. The Commissioners report outlined the arrangements in place for monitoring and sharing information on the numerous work streams to enable improvement. The Panel was reminded that the Commissioner also had regular meetings with the Chief Constable, held in public, which covered performance issues. This information was available on the Commissioners website.

All forces that were in the 'engage' phase with HMICFRS were discussed at the Policing Performance Oversight Group (PPOG) chaired by HMCIC Andy Cooke. The Commissioner confirmed that another area of work which was also kept high on the PPOG agenda, was the Child Protection Inspection which had taken place a few months prior to the PEEL inspection. This had highlighted a number of issues which were unexpected.

The Panel asked a number of questions and discussed issues raised in the recent Inspection reports which provided the following information:

- The Commissioner felt that the force had lost sight of what the public expected in terms of communication. This may have been due to the Pandemic and the challenges and demands of services changing.
- It had been difficult to measure the effect of some of the changes that had taken place, such as IT changes. These changes had not been implemented as well as they could have been and may have taken supervision away from the process of training new officers and working through the process and offering advice and support.
- The Chief Constables senior leadership team had changed significantly in the last 18 months and there had been a number of promotions and new staff members which was helping to redesign solutions and get the service back to 'outstanding'.
- It was felt that the new operating model would improve morale and therefore performance.

- The inspection letter of 10 February 2023 referred to effective supervision of investigations and 'no meaningful improvement in this area'. The Commissioner informed the Panel that there had been several changes since this inspection in December. The Chief Constable had been involved in the promotion of Sergeants and was confident that they knew what was expected of them and the level of supervision needed. IT changes and redesign may take a little longer to embed which would free up more time at an appropriate officer level.
- The Commissioner informed the Panel that the type of crime had changed over the last few years with cyber; fraud; domestic violence and protecting children increasing.
- The Public Protection Unit and work on protecting children was a partnership approach and work was taking place with both Stoke and the County Council to improve services.
- More information on the PEEL report and Child protection services would be included in the Commissioners Annual report (Panel meeting - June 2023).

It was acknowledged that the Governance process was the same for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Resolved:

- a. That the report be noted.
- b. That more information on the PEEL report and Child protection services be included in the Commissioners Annual report at the June 2023 Panel meeting.

47. Police Misconduct and Complaint Regulations 2020 - annual report for 2022

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 Commissioners office now received all reviews unless they were about a senior officer, criminal or misconduct proceedings, or article 2/3 (Human Rights), the review body for these was the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

In 2022 the number of complaints had been 1,729, of which 404 were dealt with under schedule 3. Of these 404, 59 had been requested to be reviewed by the Commissioners office.

The report outlined the type of complaint and the length of time taken to investigate. Lessons learned from the reviews were fed back to the force for organisational learning.

The Panel discussed the type of allegations made against the force. Information on category 'police action following contact' would be forwarded to the Panel.

Work was underway to bring the Fire and Rescue service under the review of the Commissioner in the same way as Police service. The Panel welcomed this.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the contents of the report.

48. Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members

1. There was concern that local authorities and police forces were taking the blame, via social media, for some national decisions. An example was given of asylum seeker placements. It was asked if there was any national move to address the negative social media coverage.

Response: This had been raised with the Policing Minister at a national level.

2. How could the commissioner reassure the communities in rural areas that the relocation of response teams would not have a negative impact or increase crime.

Response: The Commissioner informed the Panel that in the main, with the exception of Equine crime, there had not been any increase in crime in rural areas and response times had not been adversely affected by any relocation.

49. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

As there was no business planned for the 24 April meeting, the next meeting would be held on 26 June 2023.

RESOLVED – That the dates of future meetings be noted.

Chairman