

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Meeting held on 10 October 2023

Present: Bernard Peters (Chair)

Attendance	
Charlotte Atkins	Dan Maycock
Adrian Bowen	Vince Merrick
Richard Cox (Vice-Chair)	Keith Walker
Gill Heesom	Jenny Barron (Substitute)

Apologies: Michael Fitzpatrick and Angela Loughran

Also in attendance: Ben Adams, Helen Fisher, and Louise Clayton

Part One

14. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made at the meeting.

15. Minutes of the two meetings held on 3 July 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the two Panel meetings, both held on the 3 July be approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

Details were submitted of decisions published by the Commissioner since the last Panel meeting.

Resolved: The decisions were noted.

17. Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public

The Panel considered the questions ask by a member of the public and the Commissioners written response which was included in the agenda pack.

With the consent of the Chairman, Mr Riley was allowed to comment on the Commissioners written response and ask a supplementary question. Mr Riley commented that a Freedom of Information (FOI), as directed in the Commissioners response, would provide him with information but not the public and this was not transparent.

Mr Riley's supplementary question was:

If the Police force is only required to record offender ethnicity, would the Commissioners office direct the Chief Constable to collect data on foreign nationals, so that the general public could see the impact on the local communities?"

The Commissioner responded that he did hold performance meetings with the Chief Constable in public and this type of data was available on his web site. If there were areas of data which it was felt were missing, he would consider adding them to the data pack which accompanied the meeting. The Commissioner confirmed that the Chief Constable had operational independence and the data on foreign nationals was not required to be collected. The Commissioner suggested that this may be a better question for MP's or the Home Secretary as they had influence over legislation and what was required to be recorded.

The Commissioner commented that the areas where Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent housed migrants were not currently areas of concern or challenge for the force locally.

Resolved: The questions asked, and the Commissioners response were noted.

18. Police and Crime Plan - Update

The Commissioner introduced his report which provided the Panel with an update on the Police and Crime Plans progress. The report set out the Commissioners priorities designed to 'Keep Staffordshire Safe.'

Following the Commissioners introduction, the Panel asked questions and the following information was gathered. This was in addition to that provided in the written report:

- Misconduct of officers was taken very seriously by all concerned. The Chief Constable had confirmed his commitment to ensure high standards of behaviour in the force at the recent Commissioners performance meeting.
- The pilots for the 'Right Care, Right Person' national initiative, which was due to be implemented in 2024, were being monitored and discussions taking place locally with all relevant partners. It was acknowledged that the Police were not leading on this initiative, and that communication between all services was key if the changes were to be implemented effectively. which regards to the public perception survey, it was acknowledged that more detailed data was needed to demonstrate the context of some of the increases. The Commissioner informed the panel that his performance meetings with the Chief Constable and the accompanying information pack did contain more information. This could be found on the Commissioners website. Comparison information with other forces

- and local geographical area differences would be useful.
- Both Male and Female victims of domestic violence were treated by the Victim and Witness Support Service. Safe accommodation was now a responsibility of local authorities.
 - Newcastle's safer streets initiative was welcomed as a success in the town.
 - There was a feeling in some localities, anti-social behaviour was not reducing and the neighbourhood policing strategy was not as effective as it could be. The Commissioner agreed that perception was an issue. The 'hot spot' visible patrolling pilots, particularly in town centres would be monitored and if successful would continue.
 - Reducing delays in the court system was seen as a priority.
 - When asked which areas needed to be improved, the Commissioner confirmed that; out of court disposals could be better; 101 call averages were not yet satisfactory; and there were concerns that vehicle crime, particularly in the south of the county, could be reduced.
 - Speed cameras were being rotated and new digital cameras being installed. These were part of a much wider list of road safety enforcement methods used to keep roads safe.
 - The Commissioner was not aware of disability hate crime being an area for concern, but he agreed to look into it.
 - Catch 22 was acknowledged as a positive support group but more 'safe' places for interviews were needed.
 - The Officer uplift programme was ahead of schedule. Officer experience was highlighted as an area of concern due to the age of new recruits. This was being addressed by ensuring that senior officers had both the time to support and guide new recruits.
 - Knife bins and bleed packs were viewed as a welcomed success initiative.

Resolved: That the Police and Crime update report be noted and that further performance information be sent to members when the Chief Constable and Commissioner performance meeting was next held.

19. Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan - Update

The Commissioner introduced his report which provided the Panel with an update on the Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan which included the Integrated Risk Management Plan. The report set out the Commissioners priorities and progress to date.

Following the Commissioners introduction, the Panel asked questions and the following information was gathered. This was in addition to that provided in the written report:

- The Commissioner confirmed that the three person crewing trail

would continue to be monitored. He confirmed that he was interested in what was right for Staffordshire not the views from elsewhere in the country.

- The roving appliance project had been viewed positively.
- Diversity of the work force would take a little time to change as recruitment took place when people retired or left the service. It was important that opportunities were well promoted and that the environment encouraged diversity. Detailed figures would be brought to the next meeting.
- Staff attending falls in the community were trained and supported by appropriate expert advice when necessary.
- The Commissioner would scrutinise that home fire safety visits were taking place to ensure all geographical areas were covered and compare the data to pre covid figures.
- Community Fire stations could be used for community use wherever possible. If Police services did co-locate with Fire services, the community may be relocated but support and assistance would be given to help them find an alternative venue.
- Building regulation and other performance data was discussed in public with the Chief Fire Officer at the performance meetings with the Commissioner. The next was due in December. The Commissioner agreed that more context was needed around the figures to ensure that the number of inspections/enforcement notices etc was comparable to other areas or what was expected for a county of this size.
- A review of the use of Volunteers was taking place currently.

Resolved:

- a) That the Fire and Rescue Service safety plan update report was noted.
- b) Detailed figures of workforce diversity would be brought to the next meeting.

20. Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members

There was a question on a Tamworth By-election candidates post on social media, claiming that there would be a public facing desk at the local Police station. The Commissioner confirmed that MP's and election candidates could not make these decisions/claims, as they would be made by the Chief Constable in conjunction with the Commissioner.

21. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

The Chairman informed the Panel that this would be Mr Walkers last meeting as independent co-optee. Mr Walker had been a member of the Panel since 2015 and had been a most valuable member during that time.

The Panels next meeting would be held on 13 November 2023.

Resolved:

- a) That Mr Walker be formally thanked for his service on the Panel over the past 8 years.
- b) That the work programme be noted.

Chair