

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel Meeting held on 1 November 2017

Present: David Williams (Chairman)

Deneice Florence-Jukes
Stephen Doyle
Ann Edgeller
Brian Edwards
Tony Kearon

Peter Jackson
Carl Bennett
Randolph Conteh
Paul Darby (Co-Optee)

The Vice-Chairman (Mr P Darby) in the Chair

Apologies: Mr K. Walker and Doug Pullen

PART ONE

16. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

17. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

18. Decisions published by the Police and Crime Commissioner

Details of decisions taken and published by the Police and Crime Commissioner since the last Panel meeting had been circulated to members..

In relation to decision number 2017/11 to award a contract valued at £145,252 for the installation of a canopy at the Baden Hall Firing Range the Commissioner was questioned on the cost effectiveness of the work and the feasibility of sharing either that or an alternative facility with a neighbouring Force. Responding the Commissioner reported on the decision to abandon the previous joint arrangement with the West Midlands Force on the use of their Firing Range as it was no longer cost effective. On the suggestion that other Forces share the Staffordshire facility, the Commissioner reported that no requests had been received.

Decision number 2017/13 instigating a feasibility study into establishing a social enterprise company to assist young offenders to access the labour market, was welcomed. The Commissioner commented that, if successful, he would seek partnerships with other agencies for the creation of similar schemes.

19. Questions to the PCC

There were no questions from the public on this occasion.

20. Visit to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) - 15 September 2017

Members of the Panel reported on their findings during a site visit to the MASH on 15 September 2017. A significant issue had been the number and complexity of referrals being made which highlighted the importance of information sharing amongst agencies. Members sought confirmation that funding levels for the service would be maintained and suggested ways in which awareness of responsibilities for the safeguarding and general protection of vulnerable children and adults could be promoted by elected members, for example in schools.

The Commissioner gave assurances that the funding of the MASH was a budget priority adding that his Office were supporting the MASH in developing the use of technology to aid the management of the information received and prioritise their workload. He sought to secure best advantage from the MASH resource partly from the adoption of the Connected Staffordshire initiative and cited the outcome of research by Stoke-on-Trent City Council on the effectiveness of work with vulnerable families as the basis of his approach. The Commissioner voiced his concern at the potential limitations on information sharing which might result from new Data Privacy Regulations effective from 2018.

P DARBY
Vice-Chairman (In the Chair)

The Chairman, Mr D Williams, in the Chair

21. Proposed Formation of National Body for Police and Crime Panels

The Secretary gave an update on the proposal to establish a National Association of Police and Crime Panels reporting that a survey of options had shown the most favourable to be the creation of a Special Interest Group (SIG) under the 'wing' of the Local Government Association. This option gave direct access to national resources and networks at minimum cost.

Panel members discussed the possible extension of the initiative to the creation of Regional or Shire based networks with views expressed ranging from concern at the risk of creating an unnecessarily bureaucratic structure to the opportunities which could be presented to better consider cross-Force activity such as tackling organised crime.

The Commissioner commented on his involvement in the formation of the National Police Chiefs Council and his chairmanship of the West Midland Regional Policing Group both of which had highlighted the cross –Force nature of much of the work of the Police service.

RESOLVED- That a further update on the proposed formation of a National Association of Police and Crime Panels be submitted to a future Panel meeting

(NB subsequent to the Panel meeting the Vice-Chairman volunteered to serve on a Steering Group to further the development of an Association)

22. Proposed Changes in Police and Fire and Rescue Services' Governance in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

The Panel had formally supported the Commissioner's Business Case for the adoption of the Governance Model for collaboration between the Police and Fire and Rescue Services in Staffordshire. (under which the Commissioner would become the Fire and Rescue Authority and the two services remain independent of each other). The Principal Authorities in Staffordshire had supported the Representative Model whereby the Commissioner would be afforded a seat on the existing Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Commissioner reported that the Business Case together with his response to the outcome of consultation on its content had been forwarded to the Home Office on 3 October 2017 for consideration under an independent assessment procedure prior to final decision by the Home Secretary. He understood that representations had been made to the Home Office about the assessment procedure and could not therefore give a detailed timetable for any future developments.

Commenting on the submission to the Home Office, the Commissioner envisaged the Business Case, if supported, would provide a further 40-70 front line Police officers and give stability to the Fire and Rescue Service, removing the risk of redundancies. The Case was based on robust, tested evidence and was the most comprehensive of those submitted to the Home Office. He was heartened by the level of engagement in the consultation exercise both by the community and public sector groups.

Questioned on the absence from the Case of any information on the operational implementation of changes, the Commissioner stressed that his role would relate to the 'governance' of the services and that the implementation of change was entirely for each, independent Chief Officer to lead on. That degree of detail was not appropriate at this stage of discussions.

It was noted that the Panel's role would extend to the Fire and Rescue Service, with its remit and responsibilities mirroring those already in place in relation to the Police service.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

23. Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire

a) Update on Overall Strategy and 'Victims and Witnesses' Priority

Introducing his update report the Commissioner highlighted the fifth priority introduced into the Strategy which related to Modern Policing, more specifically the use of technology and measures to address the rapidly changing nature of crime. Cross border activity such as had already been discussed by the panel was a significant element of this work.

Continuing, the Commissioner highlighted and responded to questions on the following issues:

Changes in approach to dealing with persons suffering mental health issues -

There had been an 83% reduction in the number of persons held in Police custodial facilities following closer working with, and Commissioner funding for, NHS mental

health service support. More recently research has been commissioned to identify the extent to which 'natural' mental health issues contribute to crime compared to those instances where issues had resulted from other circumstances such as drug abuse.

Responding to a question on the alternative accommodation to custodial facilities, the Commissioner reported that a number of Places of Safety had been opened in NHS facilities and agreed to provide Panel members with clarity on legislation relating to children being held in Places of Safety.

Victims Gateway - The service led by the Citizens' Advice Bureau continued to be accessible for everyone delivering significant improvements in support for victims.

Child Sexual Exploitation - Co-ordinated early intervention work, such as that delivered by the MASH was key to addressing CSE. A framework was being developed to standardise definitions and reporting systems to improve the information available.

Early Intervention – Work was ongoing with the Early Intervention Foundation on training Police Officers and identifying the contribution which the service could make. The complex circumstances experienced by some families required a multi-agency approach.

SPACE - The project had coincided with a 15% reduction in anti-social behaviour. The proposal to expand the scheme was welcomed by Panel members.

Youth Foundation/Princes Trust – Support for both had contributed to valuable youth engagement

Organised Crime – Required co-operation across the Criminal Justice System.

RESOLVED – That the update reports be noted.

24. Medium Term Financial Strategy - Update

Whilst it was usual for the November Panel meeting to receive an MTFS/Budget update from the Commissioner within which he gave an overall picture of the anticipated financial position of both the Force and his Office based on preliminary funding figures, he reported that he was unable to do so on this occasion due to the number and wide ranging nature of budgetary uncertainties affecting policing. These included the need for increased funding to address the challenges facing policing including terrorism and cyber crime, the government's decision to grant a bonus award to Police Officers at a cost of approximately £700,000 over the next 2 years and queries as to whether any action will be taken to address the resulting disparity with other personnel, and the postponement of a review of the police funding formula. Of local significance was the possible effect of changes in governance arrangements for Police and Fire and Rescue Services in Staffordshire.

The Commissioner commented that the National Association of PCCs is lobbying government for the relaxation of the cap on the Policing Precept.

RESOLVED – That the current position on the MTFs and preparation of the 2018/19 Budget proposals be noted.

25. Questions to the PCC by Panel members

Members of the Panel questioned/sought the views of the Commissioner on the following issues and received the responses indicated:

Question/Issue	Response
CCTV- The Commissioner had sought to extend the use of CCTV as part of the Modern Policing agenda – what progress has been made?	The original aim was to secure a standard system across Staffordshire however the current piecemeal approach had hampered progress. In the next few weeks exploratory meetings would be held with interested Authorities. An update would be provided to members
Policing Numbers – Is the Force operating with a full establishment or is a recruitment campaign proposed? Reference was made to a recent interview with the Chief Constable when the need to change the type of resource employed to address the changing nature of crime had been stressed.	The outcomes of collaboration proposals and funding levels for 2018/19 are key considerations.
Is the Commissioner proposing to abolish the role of PCSO as has been reported for the Norfolk Force	No. That approach isn't favoured for Staffordshire.
Taxi Licensing /CSE – The Bradford report had highlighted links between the taxi trade and CSE – The OPCC has worked with South Staffs Council on licensing issues- can the information be shared?	An update on action to address taxi-licensing will be provided to the Chairman.
Neighbourhood Watch Scheme – The Commissioner's commitment to it's continuation was sought	Grant funding has been allocated to District and Borough councils to support NW schemes. Local Council based initiatives will be supported. People Power Fund monies is available for NW schemes to apply for. The Smart Alert service was increasing in popularity.

26. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

The Secretary submitted details of dates and the work programme for future Panel meetings and reported on discussions with the Local Government Association on

Staffordshire hosting a training event for the Panel on the implications on its work of collaboration between Police and Fire and Rescue Services.

RESOLVED - That the report and proposed training event be noted.

Chairman