

STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 29 January 2018

NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR POLICE AND CRIME PANEL 6 NOVEMBER 2017

Report of the Secretary

Your Chairman, Vice-Chairman and support officer attended the National Conference for Police and Crime Panels at Warwick University on 6 November 2017. This was the 6th National Conference organised by Frontline Consulting and has now become a recognised valuable opportunity to update on the national picture for Panels.

Presentations/Discussions

The opening session covered the development of the role of the Panels since their inception. Whilst it was acknowledged that in exercising their scrutiny role Panels have limited 'powers,' it was argued that their strength lay in the influence which they have through their links with local authorities and the communities that they represent. Some Panels reported regular liaison meetings with stakeholders as part of their community engagement work.

Discussion on the responsibilities and workload of Panels highlighted the importance of defining the required outcomes of any piece of work undertaken to ensure that best use is made of the limited resources allocated by the Home Office. Some Panels used nominated members ('Champions') to take up specific issues on their behalf.

Your Chairman is reviewing our current practices and whether we should be pursuing any of the options discussed to ensure that we're engaged in best practice.

A further discussion topic was the proposed formation of a National Association for Police and Crime Panels. Members may recall that I reported to their last meeting that a survey of all Police and Crime Panels had shown the majority in favour of a national group being established as a Special Interest Group (SIG) 'under the wing of' the Local Government Association. That option was seen to offer the most cost effective and relatively immediate way of establishing a national body to help raise the profile and influence of Panels. Conference agreed to establish a working group to progress the formation of the SIG. Your Vice-Chairman volunteered to serve on that group.

Workshops

Police complaint system reforms (feedback from your Support Officer)- The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduces reforms to the police complaints and disciplinary systems giving three Models for the Police and Crime Commissioners involvement the handling of complaints against the police. The first Model is the minimum legislative requirement and makes the

Commissioner the appellant body for appeals about the outcome of complaints made against police officers and police staff (these are currently dealt with by the Chief Constable). The timetable for implementation is understood to have been delayed and is now expected to be around Spring 2019. Models 2 and 3 are optional and offer the Commissioner varying degrees of direct involvement in the handling and consideration of complaints.

Police and Fire Collaboration (feedback from your Chairman, Mr Williams) - This Workshop looked at working practices and required transitional arrangements. We discussed how the panel carried out its scrutiny work and what changes they had to introduce. Fortunately the Essex Panel had already completed this work and had the same model that the Staffordshire PCC is currently applying for. They explained that there was no requirement to introduce a change to the Panel in size or increase the number of meetings and that the scrutiny of the new Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner continued in the same manner as was previously carried out, with the only difference being the plans and working practices proposed and managed by the new office were discussed and explained to enable effective scrutiny of the Fire Service part of the portfolio.

Co-responding in Mental Health (feedback from your Vice-Chairman – Mr Darby)- This very informative workshop was led by a representative of the Leicestershire Street Triage and PAVE team. Their approach is to have a CCG and Police and Crime Commissioner funded (NHS employed) mental health nurse based at each of their custody sites. They also have four dedicated police officers on patrol to deal with cases where mental health issues are apparent or suspected. Between 2014 -2016 the scheme saw a 66% reduction in the number of people with mental ill health detained in Police custody. It has also seen a significant reduction in the average time taken to deal with individuals under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 (taking a person to a place of safety where they are thought to be at risk due to mental illness).

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Secretary to the Panel

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