

Police, Fire and Crime Panel – 26 September 2022

Police and Crime Plan Update

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report is to update the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the delivery of Police and Crime Plan for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Panel note the update on the delivery of the plan and make comment as appropriate.

3. Background

- 3.1. In December 2021, the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue, and Crime (Staffordshire Commissioner) published his Police and Crime Plan for 2021-2024. The plan provides the strategic direction for how policing should be delivered over the next three years. It details how the Commissioner's Office (SCO) will work with Staffordshire Police, health, councils, the wider criminal justice system and community groups to reduce the number of victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, reduce casualties on our roads and prevent people suffering due to the actions of others.
- 3.2. The plan sets out the Commissioner's priorities, designed to 'Keep Staffordshire Safe':
 - **A local and responsive service:** Understand and deal with what matters to communities respond promptly to incidents and work with partners to solve problems and prevent them from getting worse. This will mean that crime and ASB reduces, our roads are safer and confidence in Staffordshire Police increases.
 - **Prevent harm and protect people:** Prevent harm and protect people (particularly children and those that are vulnerable) by ensuring they are safeguarded and receive the help and support they need.
 - **Support victims and witnesses:** Ensure victims and witnesses are provided with exceptional specialist support services so they feel able to cope and recover from the impact of crime and ASB.
 - **Reduce offending and reoffending:** Ensure people are challenged and supported to make life choices that will prevent them from offending and perpetrators don't reoffend. Doing so will mean fewer victims of crime.
 - **A more effective criminal justice system:** Ensure Staffordshire Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, Courts, the Probation Service and HM

Prison Service all work seamlessly so that effective justice is delivered more quickly.

- 3.3. How effectively the service performs against these priorities is a key part of how the Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public. To this end, the Chief Constable must have regard to the Police and Crime Plan in producing his Policing Plan for the force. Both the Police and Crime Plan and the Policing Plan will be kept under review and potentially refreshed during the Commissioner's term of office to take account of finances, changes in national policy or major events.
- 3.4. An annual report covering the period from the start of the Commissioner's term of office in May 2021 to the end of March 2022 was received by the panel on 27 June 2022. This report highlights progress since April 2022.

4. Progress to Date

4.1. A local and responsive service

4.1.1. The new police operating model came into effect on 27 June 2022. It has been designed to provide a consistent policing approach across every area whilst also supporting the need to match capacity with demand. Early indications are that it has provided increased capacity to respond, investigate crime, give victims the attention they need and more time for proactive policing. Further performance improvements are expected as the model becomes fully staffed in the coming months as new recruits join local policing teams and officers currently in training become ready for independent patrol.

4.1.2. Key features of the model include:

Enhanced and joined-up local policing through two local policing commands aligned to the two top-tier local authorities, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. Ten local policing teams are now aligned to district boundaries and consist of response teams more closely connected to local issues and neighbourhood policing officers and PCSOs working with partners to problem solve the recurring issues that matter most to communities. Each local policing team has a Harm Reduction Hub and there are now two local CID teams, one within City Command and one within County Command. Officers have reported that the new model has greatly improved communication between teams and is leading to better management of incidents and investigations. This is expected to improve the quality and consistency of services provided to victims and witnesses, which will be measured in due course through satisfaction surveys.

A more responsive service with increased capacity for response with reduced response times and more time allowed to investigate crime, provide a better service to victims, enable more proactive policing and

see more offenders brought to justice. Improvements are already being seen in the time taken for locally-based officers to respond to Grade 1 (immediate response) incidents from the point they are despatched to attend. More incidents are being attended by response officers first, meaning that neighbourhood officers are free to focus on proactive work, solving ongoing problems in communities. There has been a slight increase in the number of arrests, the number of offenders charged and other positive criminal justice outcomes.

A specialist crime command supporting the most serious and complex crime demands is now in place. This includes specialists in public protection, dedicated to improving the care the force provides to the most vulnerable people. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service have identified effective investigations and appropriate support for victims as a cause of concern. The force is undertaking a large-scale audit of investigations and embedding improved quality assurance processes. There has been significant improvement in the time taken to validate reported crimes and refer people for support from the Victims Gateway, a key component of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

Force contact and operations command to ensure services are responsive, effective and bespoke across the whole of Staffordshire. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of both 999 and 101 call handling is crucial to public confidence and urgent improvements are needed. Shortcomings have been identified as a cause of concern by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service and progress against an improvement plan is a major element of the Commissioner's scrutiny and accountability process with the Force. Current demand is extraordinarily high and the timing of peaks in demand differ from those previously experienced. Around 220,000 calls were made to 999 in the past 12 months which is an increase of 20% on the previous year. Much of this relates to concern for people's safety, incidents involving people with mental ill-health and missing persons rather than crime. This is not unique to Staffordshire; other forces are observing similar changes in demand. Through the Strategic Community Safety Forum, the Commissioner is pressing partner agencies to do more to ensure people have access to appropriate support. This will help to ease the additional pressure being placed on the Force Contact Centre and local policing teams, but will take time to address. In the interim, additional staff have been recruited into the Force Contact Centre and a triage system has been implemented to improve call prioritisation which is already taking pressure from 101 call queues. Working practices, supervision, shift patterns and performance management are also under active review.

Improved IT support with 3,000 personal issue laptops now rolled out to all officers and staff to enable them to work flexibly, spending more time out of the station and in communities. Work is also ongoing to test and implement the next phase of handheld mobile devices and

significant work has been carried out behind the scenes to build a more stable IT platform.

- 4.1.3. **Commissioner's Independent Scrutiny Panels** have now been established to replace former Safer Neighbourhood Panels. Specialist panels, focusing on themes such as Stop & Search, Use of Force and Custody & Detention now have workplans in place. They will be expected to interrogate data to understand variations, review instances against criteria to evaluate levels of compliance with standards and principles and report their findings and recommendations to the Commissioner and Chief Constable. The panels are more representative of communities than previously and will bring greater transparency to critical areas of police activity.
- 4.1.4. The Deputy Commissioner is liaising with Local Authority community safety leads to understand how they use the tools and powers available to them to tackle **antisocial behaviour** in their areas with the aim of making services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent more consistent and effective eg. Community trigger. **£1m in Community Grants has been awarded by the Commissioner to local Community Safety Partnerships to fund local initiatives.**
- 4.1.5. A group has been formed of representatives from Staffordshire Police and local councils to refresh and implement the Staffordshire-wide **Illegal Trespass Protocol** taking full account of new legislation and ensuring a consistent understanding. At its first meeting, the group received a presentation on the impact of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 on procedures for managing unauthorised encampments and agreed the importance of a collective and consistent approach. A draft protocol was circulated for comments and the final version will be circulated shortly for agreement and adoption.
- 4.1.6. In order to evaluate the impact of the Police and Crime Plan, develop community engagement strategies and drive future decision-making it is vital to gain a clear understanding of public perceptions of crime, confidence in policing and feelings of safety and security. A **new public survey** has been commissioned which has enabled a baseline to be taken ahead of the new policing model with a further survey to be carried out at the start of 2023. The results are being analysed and will be discussed at the Public Performance Meeting on 4th October.

4.2. Prevent harm and protect people

- 4.2.1. The Commissioner has established a Staffordshire-wide **Community Safety Forum** to improve collaboration between agencies, align their strategic direction and ensure prompt joint action to tackle community

safety issues. The Forum has had two successful meetings and kickstarted detailed pieces of work focused on antisocial behaviour, illegal trespass and drugs.

- 4.2.2. Two **PSHE Coordinator** posts continue to support schools and the quality of PSHE curriculum delivery. Education packages have been created, alongside the Prevent Education offer, to support the Knife Angel visit. Training is planned with identified Police staff to embed best practice principles for PSHE within the Force and the development of age appropriate education packages and professionals' packs for forthcoming county lines week.
- 4.2.3. Following the successful completion of projects under the first three rounds of Home Office **Safer Streets Fund** initiative, the SCO was successful in its bid for funding under Round 4. £750,000 is to be invested in tackling anti-social behaviour and violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Stafford, Burton, Newcastle and areas of Stoke-on-Trent. This funding is in addition to over £2 million already secured by the SCO through Safer Streets and £300,000 through the related Home Office Safer Women at Night (SWAN) initiative. The funding will be used to provide a range of partnership interventions including physical crime prevention improvements, educational programmes, community awareness campaigns and engagement work, personal development programmes, diversionary activities and street pastor schemes.
- 4.2.4. Since the publication of the Serious Violence Strategy in 2018, the Government announced a set of programmes to tackle serious violence across England and Wales. To reinforce this as a national priority, the new Serious Violence Duty has been introduced through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022. It places a legal obligation on specific organisations to plan and collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. The **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Violence Reduction Alliance** (VRA) continues to prepare the local response to the Duty. The Commissioner has received confirmation of additional Home office funding of £981,000 over three years to support the delivery of the Duty. The first VRA conference was held in May to promote the work of the alliance. The event was attended by over 120 people and will in future be held annually as a Community Safety Conference. It followed the visit of the Knife Angel sculpture to Stoke-on-Trent during April. The visit was supported by PHSE Coordinators' links to schools. The Coordinators are preparing a legacy Knife Angel event for 100 schoolchildren at the New Vic Theatre in Newcastle-under-Lyme in November, to coincide with Operation Sceptre. There is now a dedicated website for the VRA and a Communications and Engagement Officer has been appointed to improve communications across the partnership and develop campaigns covering exploitation and violence reduction.
- 4.2.5. The VRA has continued to develop campaigns and education initiatives to tackle **violence against women and girls** (VAWG), and funding

through round 4 of the Safer Streets Fund will enable a broader approach to be taken. Education resources are being developed for primary age children and will be rolled out in November to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Vulnerability awareness training continues to be rolled out and will also be available on the VRA website. A Safer Places for Women and Girls Charter is being promoted with businesses and work is ongoing in Hanley, Stafford and Newcastle-under-Lyme to provide safe places for women in town centres.

- 4.2.6. The **Child Criminal Exploitation/Child Sexual Exploitation/Missing Service** continues to be delivered by Catch22. The service carries out return home interviews with children and young people who go missing to try and identify the reasons why they have gone missing, signpost support and prevent any future missing episodes. The CCE and CSE Services support children and young people who are at risk of exploitation, aims to prevent them from committing violent crime and seeks to address the risks faced by young people. Between April and June 2022, 908 missing incidents were reported for 517 individual children, the service completed 728 return home interviews, 154 children were supported for CSE and 114 children were supported for CCE.
- 4.2.7. The **SPACE programme** brings together public, voluntary and private sector organisations to provide support for potentially vulnerable young people to help increase skills, improve health and wellbeing and create opportunities with an additional aim of reducing levels of anti-social behaviour. This year's programme ran between 25 July and 26 August and whilst attendance figures are currently being collated, early indications are that they are likely to exceed last year's, when over 6,000 young people aged between 8 and 17 attended over 1,400 events. In 2022 there was a 70% increase in activities compared to Space 2021 and saw an additional 75 venues taking part. A total of 210. When the final figures are available, they will be presented to the panel along with analysis of the impact on youth-related ASB during the summer period.
- 4.2.8. A separate, detailed paper on **Road Safety** has been submitted to the panel as requested.

4.3. Support victims and witnesses

- 4.3.1. All PCCs have recently completed a process to self-assess compliance with the **Code of Practice for Victims of Crime**. This is being overseen by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and feedback and best practice is being made available. Compliance with the Code will become a legal requirement, forming part of the Victims Law, and metrics are being developed nationally to enable effective monitoring.

- 4.3.2. The SCO and its partners are also continuing work on a new '**end-to-end**' **victim survey** from the point when a crime is reported to when the victim exits criminal justice services. This will allow us to monitor how well we are delivering our services, establish whether we are meeting victims' expectations and identify areas for improvement. The survey questions are almost complete and will cover all services the victim may have accessed during their journey through the criminal justice system. A pilot of 20 victims will be surveyed initially to ensure the question set and process is appropriate.
- 4.3.3. Access to support from the **Staffordshire Victims Gateway** is dependent on prompt transfer of victims' details by Staffordshire Police. The force has recently invested in this area to improve the timeliness of referrals and get Gateway referral levels back to where they should be. This will mean that from August, almost all victims details will be transferred to the Gateway within the 48-hour limit set in the Victims Code of Practice.
- 4.3.4. With commitment from Staffordshire County and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils to support the recommissioning process, a procurement exercise is now underway to re-tender for Staffordshire **Domestic Abuse** victim and perpetrator services from October 2023. Between October 2018 and March 2022, the current service, operating under the New Era brand, received 21,884 victim referrals and provided support to 13,527 victims. 1,200 referrals were made to the perpetrator service with 527 receiving support. New approaches continue to be considered by the SCO and Staffordshire Police to meet growing demand and ensure those affected by DA receive the most appropriate support. The SCO recently applied to the Home Office under the 'Children Affected by DA Fund' (CADA) which seeks to secure additional investment to compliment current prevention and early intervention work in schools over the next three years. A decision is awaited.
- 4.3.5. Following a successful bidding process, five local organisations providing **domestic abuse or sexual violence support** will benefit from further funding from the Ministry of Justice Community-based Fund and Independent Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence Advisor Fund. The funding, which totals £471,765 a year over three years, is designed to increase advocacy support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, including children, so that organisations can meet additional demand and ease waiting list pressures. The funding will be used to provide:
- Two Child Sexual Exploitation Support Workers
 - Counselling staff for those affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence
 - Four Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, two of whom will have specialised roles
 - Additional staff to support victims of domestic abuse to enable them to cope and recover

4.3.6. NHS England have provided funding for Staffordshire to undertake a **mental health needs assessment** specifically for victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse. CPI were commissioned to undertake this work. Partners and providers were invited to take part, providing staff interviews and service user surveys. The final draft was presented to the Commissioning Development Board in April 2022 and the RASSO Steering Group in May 2022. A funding proposal was submitted to NHS England in August 2022 to address the recommendations outlined in the assessment. The bid is for £50,000 per year for 3 years and notification of the outcome is expected in September 2022.

4.3.7. Staffordshire University has undertaken an assessment of our local response to the needs of **sexual offence victims/survivors from ethnically diverse communities**. This was submitted in June 2022 with recommendations now being reviewed with partners to establish the next phase of this project.

4.4. Reduce offending and reoffending

4.4.1. Since the last report to the Panel, work has continued to progress the remaining elements of the Reducing Reoffending Strategy Action Plan for 2022.

4.4.2. Work has continued with partners to further improve offenders' access to **rehabilitation support services** to help them reintegrate successfully into the community and avoid further offending. This includes:

- Taking forward the commissioning of a new pilot employment support service for offenders, targeted at the IOM cohort;
- Working with local authorities to ensure the effective targeting of additional funding for drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services becoming available via the Government's new Drugs Strategy, with a view to:
 - improving the operation of care pathways between criminal justice settings and drug treatment services
 - increasing the number of adults and young people engaged in treatment as a condition of Community Orders
 - increasing the number of adults and young people engaged in treatment in the community following release from prison/youth custody
- Supporting delivery of the existing Community Sentence Treatment Requirements (CSTR) pilot, now in its second and final year, with the aim of increasing the use of Community Orders with Mental Health Treatment Requirements (MHTR) by local courts

4.4.3. Following a comprehensive needs assessment and extensive consultations with partners and stakeholders, work on developing a

revised and updated **Reducing Reoffending Strategy** is now complete. Building on the existing strategy (in place since April 2019), the new strategy sets out how criminal justice agencies and other partners in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent will continue to work together over the next 2-3 years to deliver a long-term, sustainable reduction in offending and reoffending rates. There are many factors that can lead people into criminal behaviour and obstacles to them moving away from crime. The strategy therefore highlights the continued importance of joined-up approaches across agencies both in the criminal justice system and more generally across local government, health and other sectors, to preventing and reducing offending. It has two key aims:

- Promoting timely interventions across agencies in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to reduce the risk of people becoming involved in offending behaviour; and
- Ensuring that, where people do offend, they are brought to account for their actions whilst being given the appropriate support and encouragement to move on and to avoid reoffending in the future.

4.4.4. The **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Reducing Reoffending Board** (SSRRB) continues to govern the delivery of the strategy, ensuring a consistent approach to strategic decision-making and resource allocation, with progress reports on implementation being provided to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, Local Criminal Justice Board, Strategic Community Safety Forum and other boards as appropriate.

4.4.5. The **Stop it Now!** campaign targeting pre-arrest/potential offenders who were worried about their sexual thoughts towards children took place in March 2022. Outcomes include:

- Between 1-25 March, Stop It Now! website users increased by 376% compared to the previous period (from 244 to 1,162 users)
- Sessions increased by 381% (from 288 to 1,384).
- The campaign was followed by an online multi-agency training event in late April presented by the director of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation which was attended by over 70 delegates from a wide range of organisations.

4.5. A more effective criminal justice system

4.5.1. In his role as Chair of the **Local Criminal Justice Partnership Board**, the Commissioner is taking the opportunity to refresh and refocus its work and ensure that it aligns with the ongoing work of the Regional Criminal Justice Board. The board is initially focusing on key deliverables including the level of early guilty pleas and reducing the time taken to compile cases. Significant backlogs in the Crown Court system remain and the work of the Board to address this is increasingly challenging as the ongoing barrister strikes will potentially cause further delays.

4.5.2. Part 2 of the Government's review of the role of PCC and the Victims' Bill contain complementary proposals to strengthen the role of PCCs in

relation to the oversight of victims' experiences in the criminal justice system and commissioning support services. It is expected that this will provide a statutory framework to assist PCCs in leveraging their support in improving the system for the benefit of victims and witnesses.

- 4.5.3. This will be supported by proposals to improve PCCs access to criminal justice data. Sharing relevant data in a timely way is essential to understanding how effective the system is but the process is often constrained by technical difficulty and a risk-averse culture. The [Home Office Delivery Data Dashboard](#) alongside Staffordshire Police, HMCTS, CPS, Probation, Prisons and Health data is being used to populate the **CJS Performance Framework** and highlight areas for improvement. Whilst Staffordshire is in a relatively good position, national guidance and examples of good practice will support the work of the Local Criminal Justice Board in delivering improvements. Improving the quality of investigations is a current priority for Staffordshire Police and the Commissioner expects to see evidence of improvement in the increase of early guilty pleas. Within the wider CJS reduction of backlogs of criminal cases within the magistrates and crown courts is the priority for the LCJPB.
- 4.5.4. Work continues to develop an end-to-end **victim satisfaction survey** which seeks victims of crime experiences from the point of reporting a crime through to exiting the criminal justice system. In addition to helping to understand the emotional impact this might have, it will provide crucial insight into where problems with processes, communication and delays occur, enabling agencies across the system to make informed improvements.

Ben Adams
Staffordshire Commissioner Police | Fire and Rescue | Crime

Contact Officer: Ralph Butler
Telephone: 01785 232437
Email: ralph.butler@staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk