

## **Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel**

Report of the Chairman of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel

To Staffordshire County Council

In accordance with agreed practice, I am reporting on matters dealt with by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel at its meeting on 26 September 2022.

The main items considered were:

### **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. With the consent of the Chairman, Ms Mallender was allowed to ask a supplementary question which was “when was Policing going to improve in the local area?” The Commissioner responded that it was difficult sometimes to achieve the right balance and satisfy the hopes of the community. Contact would continue with the community and the Police would remain fully engaged. The Commissioner agreed to meet with the local community at a suitable forum.

### **Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)**

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

Decision 002 Public confidence surveys

- Decision 003 – Crest Support to LCJB performance framework: year 3
- Decision Note – Armed Police Training Facility Decision

The Panel were reminded that there would be an informal meeting to discuss the armed police training facility in November.

### **Police and Crime Plan Update**

The Police and Crime update report was presented by the Commissioner who explained the progress made against his strategic priorities. He reminded Members that detailed performance management and action against targets was also considered at his public Performance meetings held with the Chief Constable. [Public Meetings - Staffordshire Commissioner \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk) The next was due to be held on 4 October and members were invited to attend or watch on the webcast.

As a result of the Commissioners presentation and questions from the Panel, the following information was gained. This was in addition to that provided in the written report:

- Regarding the new Local Policing Model; early indications showed that it had provided extra capacity to respond to and investigate

crime and support victims. It was reported that officers felt that local knowledge was now being used more effectively.

- Extra investment in the Contact Centre included training more people to deal with calls. It was hoped that this would help to reduce response times. It was felt that the performance of the Contact Centre remained a priority. The training of recruits was key to improvement. However, it was found that as people become fully trained they were moving on to become Police Officers. Whilst this was welcomed, it did affect contact centre performance.
- Local and responsive services were responding to calls at the same pace, despite a 20% increase in calls both locally and nationally against pre covid levels.
- Members felt that better communication with the public was needed, particularly around expected contact or response times.
- £750,00 extra funding for Safer streets projects had been received for Stoke on Trent, Stafford, Newcastle and Burton areas. The detail on how it could be used would be available soon.
- The Illegal trespass protocol was a partnership approach and involved developing a policy which was then subject to consultation. This inevitably took time but this was progressing.
- Public 'Bleed Kits' were a response to knife crime. There was a desire to expand this initiative and possibly attract government funding.
- There was a perception that Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) was increasing. The Commissioner informed the Panel that ASB was actually reducing in Staffordshire overall, but it had increased in certain localised areas and on Public Open Space, but less so in Communities. Again, this was an area of shared responsibility but when hot spots and causes had been identified, this could be addressed quite quickly.
- With regard to the inspection report, the Panel recognised that the Chief Constable had recently been appointed and had inherited the failings identified in the service. The action plan to address the issues was being monitored by the Commissioner.
- The Panel were concerned that whilst the Inspection report had raised a number of areas which needed improvement, these were areas which had been highlighted as areas of concern in the past and little improvement could be demonstrated. The Commissioner felt that there were a number of key themes which ran through the report which needed to be picked up, such as communication; capacity; leadership; and use of technology. There had been a number of new officers over recent years and this was an opportunity to change culture; make improvement; and take ownership of the problems.

The Commissioner was thanked for his update report. The Panel remained concerned that the issues raised in the HMICFRS Inspection

report needed to be addressed and that the public should be able to access the information and gain reassurance that issues were being tackled. Whilst it was acknowledged that performance against improvements would be measured and made public through the Performance meetings held with the Chief Constable, the Panel asked the Commissioner to attend a special meeting of the Panel to discuss in more detail. The Chairman reminded members that the County Councils Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee covered Community Safety issues. He felt that to enable transparency and avoid duplication, it would be appropriate to invite the Safeguarding O&S Committee members to the Panel meeting to take part in the discussion.

The Panel resolved to invite the Commissioner to a further meeting of the Panel to discuss the recent HMICFRS Inspection report.

### **Fire and Rescue Service - Safety Plan 2020-2024 Update**

The Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan update report was presented by the Commissioner who explained the progress made against his strategic priorities.

It was acknowledged that since the last meeting of the Panel a HMICFRS Inspection report had been published which had rated the service overall as 'good' but had highlighted a number of areas which needed some improvement. Work had started on this and Members were again reminded that detailed performance management and action against targets was considered at the Commissioners public Performance meetings held with the Chief Fire Officer. [Public Meetings - Staffordshire Commissioner \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/public-meetings) The next was due to be held on 20 October and members were invited to attend or watch on the webcast. The Commissioner felt confident that the new leadership and change in culture would lead to improvements in the areas highlighted as needing attention.

Members asked for confirmation that should industrial action take place, the Fire and Rescue service would be sufficiently staffed to manage any emergency's. It was confirmed that any action would be after bonfire night and discussions were taking place with other services to try to continue with emergency cover over the strike period. Following a suggestion by a Panel member, the use of volunteers or retired officers would be considered.

Options around a number of operational sites which had previously been agreed to relocate, were being reconsidered and a number of opportunities were being explored for example relocating other services to share sites.

Following the recent house fire in Lichfield, where a number of fire engines had been pulled-in from neighbouring towns, it was confirmed that the service balanced risk and prioritised responses to ensure that resources were normally in the right place when needed.

### **Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership**

The Deputy Commissioner introduced the report which provided an update on the Safer Roads Partnership and its current priorities and activity. It was noted that the Police were a partner and that the Commissioner and/or Deputy chaired the Board meetings.

Following the presentation of the report and the subsequent Panel questions, the following information was gained. This was in addition to that provided in the written report:

- The report contained the Partnerships objectives. Under each priority would be a set of targets which would be measured and reported to the Board.
- Some targets were beyond the partnerships control for example; heart attacks whilst driving were unavoidable, as opposed to Drug driving which could be influenced by media awareness, police stops etc.
- Designated parks which could be used to teach children road safety were a good idea but space was not always available. Schools used a number of other resources and safe areas.
- Sources of data was improving but was limited at the moment (2020). Data was collected to respond to government bodies but the 2021/22 was not yet formalised. This information would be available for the Police Performance meeting on 4 October.
- Drug driving figures were higher than drink driving. The Deputy Commissioner would raise with the partnership to see if there were opportunities to train or increase support after conviction to stop repeat offending.
- Off road bikes were a problem in some areas. This would be raised at the partnership meeting, but members were encouraged to report incidents to local police.

### **Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme**

The Panel agreed to move the Police Misconduct and complaints regulation 2020 – annual report to February 2023.

Webcast can be found at [Browse meetings - Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel - Staffordshire County Council](#)

For more information on these meetings or on the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in general please contact Mandy Pattinson e mail [mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk)

*Details of Panel meetings are issued to contact officers in each of the District/Borough Councils in the County and Stoke-on-Trent City Council for posting on their own web sites.*

Councillor Bernard Peters, Chairman  
Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel