

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel Meeting held on 29 January 2018

Present: David Williams (Chairman)

Deneice Florence-Jukes
Stephen Doyle
Ann Edgeller
Brian Edwards
Peter Jackson

Carl Bennett
Randolph Conteh
Mr K. Walker (Co-Optee)
Jill Waring

Also in attendance: Susan Finney (OPCC)

Apologies: Paul Darby and Doug Pullen

PART ONE

27. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

28. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

29. 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.

Responding to a question on decision number 2017/015 appointing an independent organisation to scope early intervention models and delivery options for Youth Offending Services in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent the Commissioner explained his wish to explore with those two Authorities the potential to direct more resource to frontline /preventative services.

A query was raised on a previous decision of the Commissioner to fund refurbishment works at Cannock Police Station given that an Estates review was ongoing. Replying, the Commissioner gave assurances that only operationally essential works were currently being authorised.

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30. Questions to the PCC

There were no questions from members of the public on this occasion.

31. National Conference for Police and Crime Panels - 6 November 2017 - Feedback

The Panel received feedback by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Support Officer on the national conference for Police and Crime Panels staged by Frontline Consulting in November 2017.

Discussion issues highlighted included the reform of the Police complaints system and the transfer from the Chief Constable to the Police and Crime Commissioner of the appellant role for appeals against decision made on complaints against Police Officers and Staff.

A summary was submitted of discussions on the effect on the membership and workload of the Panels as a result of any approved transfer to Commissioners of governance responsibility for the fire and rescue services. Such change was regarded as minimal.

The Vice-Chairman reported on a presentation given on support for persons with mental health issues when in custody. Responding to a question on the location of mental health nurses at custody suites in Staffordshire the Commissioner reported that the practice had been adopted.

On the suggested formation of a national body for Police and Crime Panels it was reported that discussions were ongoing on the formation of a Special Interest Group 'under the wing' of the Local Government Association.

RESOLVED: That the Conference report be noted.

32. Proposed Changes to Governance Arrangements for Police and Fire and Rescue Services in Staffordshire

Neither the Panel Chairman nor Police and Crime Commissioner were able to give an update on the CIPFA assessment of the Commissioner's Business Case as feedback was still awaited.

33. Police and Crime Commissioner's Proposed 2018/19 Precept for the Policing Element of the Council Tax Bill and Medium Term Financial Strategy

The PCC submitted his proposed Precept for consideration by the Panel reporting that for 2018/19 and 2019/20 Government had given specific authority to PCCs to raise up to £12 per annum additional Precept per household, over and above the 2% increase limit already permitted. In announcing this increase Government also indicated that Home Office funding would remain 'cash flat' for the 2 year period. For Staffordshire that grant is £116.900million each year.

It was reported that, working with the Chief Constable, the OPCC had considered a number of options for the allocation of the potential £12 increase. The PCCs final budget proposed to increase the Precept by £11.40 in total giving a maximum increase of 6.29% in Council Tax Band rates. This equates to almost £5million additional funding for Policing and/or community safety priorities.

Combining the funding from Government and via the Precept, the PCCs proposed budget for 2018/19 is £183.449million (compared to £178.587m for 2017/18).

The PCC detailed the intended allocation of the funding , stressing that the primary aims of his proposals were to reinstate resources for neighbourhood policing and to better enable the Force to respond to the changing and increasingly complex nature of crime such as CSE, Domestic Violence and Cyber crime. The Forensic Service was identified as an area requiring a significant increase in budget allocation.

The Panel debated and questioned the PCC at length on neighbourhood policing with the PCC acknowledging that in recent years resource had had to inevitably be redirected from that area towards dealing with more 'sophisticated' crime. The Commissioner was mindful of his pledge to maximise visibility/presence of the Force and referred to the provision in the budget for an additional 44 Police Officers in 2018/19 contributing to a total of 69 additional officers by 2020. The provision of additional resource was accompanied by stringent Performance Management measures to be implemented by the Chief Constable. The PCC acknowledged the Panel's comments on the need to evidence to the public that their support for an increase in Precept had a positive impact in terms of improving policing presence.

The Panel discussed various other elements of the PCCs Budget/Precept report including the anticipated level of Capital Receipts, partly attributed to the imminent completion of the sale of the former Police HQ site and the target reduction of £750,000 in overtime payments as the Chief Constable addressed perceived inefficiencies.

RESOLVED: That the Panel support the Budget and not exercise its veto over the proposed £11.40 (6.29%) increase in precept for 2018/19; the Police and Crime Commissioner to be notified accordingly.

34. Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire

a) Overall Strategy - Update

The Commissioner submitted a progress report on the implementation of his overall SFU Communities for Staffordshire Strategy, highlighting a number of key elements including action to address Child Sexual Exploitation with the continued funding of a co-ordinator and a Missing Children Service , the latter being jointly commissioned with Staffordshire County and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils. A collaborative approach including the use of standard phraseology had been adopted and now provided a model for adoption nationally

b) Modern Policing Priority - Update

The Commissioner explained that this theme focussed on the need to develop more effective specialist capabilities and maximise the use of new technology. The Chief Constable had drawn up a 'Blue Print for Change' containing various operational initiatives such as the development of a resolution centre to deliver a more informed and streamlined response to non-emergency service requests, thus reducing the demand on front line resources to enable them to be used more effectively.

RESOLVED: That the update reports be noted.

35. 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
What is the procedure for members of the public reporting a non-emergency crime (eg. lost property) when they can't contact their Local Policing Unit?	Will provide a response. The National Police Chief Council is discussing the feasibility of transferring responsibility for issues such as lost property away from the Police to an alternative public sector agency.
What support exists within the Staffordshire Force to support staff with mental health issues/Will the PCC consider pursuing Dementia Friendly status for the Staffordshire Force and OPCC?	Will provide a response.
What action is being taken to address Rural Crime such as the recent case covered by the Press?	The extensively rural nature of the County presents resourcing problems. Dedicated Rural Crime team exists. Members of the Rural Community are being encouraged to subscribe to Smart Alerts.
How are Police Pensions funded?	Mainly by Central Government (an occasional top-up contribution has previously been required from the Force budget). The PCC is responsible for funding certain additional benefits eg relating to Injuries on Duty.

36. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

The Secretary submitted details of the dates and work programme for future Panel meetings.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Chairman