

STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 1 February 2021

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANELS
and
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANELS
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

23-25 NOVEMBER 2020

1. Report of the Secretary

Your Vice-Chairman, Mr Walker (Independent Member) and your support officer attended the Virtual National Conference for Police, Fire and Crime Panels at hosted by Warwick University on 23-25 November 2020. This was the 9th National Conference organised by Frontline Consulting. Representatives of most Panels in England and Wales attend this event as it is recognised as a valuable opportunity to update on the national picture for Panels.

The presence of representatives of the majority of Panels provided the opportunity to also stage the AGM of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels (NAPFCPs).

2. NAPFCPs Annual General Meeting.

The Association was established in 2018 as a Special Interest Group under the auspices of the Local Government Association.

3. National Conference

The event followed its normal format of having a keynote speaker and Q/A session during the morning and a selection of themed workshops during the afternoon. As the Conference was being held virtually, the conference was being hosted by Warwick University over three days as apposed to the normal one-day conference.

3.1 Keynote Speech's – Lord Toby Harris – Co-Chair of the all-party parliamentary group on policing and security

Lord Harris expressed the opinion that it had been an interesting time for policing with the unforeseen requirement to oversee Covid-19 regulations. He felt that crime was changing with it becoming more technologically based with increased online crime. Over the summer, with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) demonstrations across the world, it was felt that a large section of the community may feel disenfranchised and work had to take place both nationally and at a local level to connect with communities.

3.1.1 Paddy Tipping – Chair of Police and Crime Commissioners

Partnership working had moved forward during lockdown, particularly through the Local Resilience Forums and it was felt that this needed to continue in the future.

The Criminal justice system was struggling with long delays in the Crown Court system, with cases being listed now for 2023.

There was now a need to reflect on what we want policing to be in the future. The Black Lives Matter movement had highlighted that the service had moved forward but not enough. Work was taking place to address this, details of which would be available soon. Other announcements expected soon concerned:

1. Brexit – a no deal would cause major problems for police – not just the visible things like queuing lorry's at ports, but also lose of access to tools such as the European arrest warrant/data/information. Mitigation plans were being developed.
2. One-year spending review. Details in provisional settlement were expected in mid-December. The uplift of officer's recruitment was on track.
3. Police and Crime Commissioner review – phase one was complete with phase 2 planned for after the May elections.

3.1.2 Yvette Cooper – Chair of Select Committee on Home Affairs

During the last year, the most challenging issues had been:

- Safeguarding risk for young people.
- increase in domestic abuse
- mental health crisis
- policing for the future report produced 2 years ago – changing patterns of crime and being able to react to the changing demand
- welcome in the uplift increase in numbers
- wrong time to be discussing pay freeze
- BLM - Can't overestimate the importance of this.

During comments by the Panel and the Q/A session, the following points were made:

- public compliance with Covid-19 rules had been variable. There was now a loss of confidence which needed to be rebuilt. The public wanted to comply in the first phase and there was now a need to be open about difficulties and consequences etc. Police forces generally, were looking at education and encouragement before enforcement.
- What is the police role in online crime? Hard to engage with online /social media providers. The introduction of a duty of care was welcomed.
- Rape convictions had fallen. There is a need for a national discussion and a joined-up approach between Police and CPS.

- Recruitment of new officers – are we doing enough to address equalities and making use/developing PSOs?
- Prevent strategy – does it need to be refreshed?
- Replacement of emergency network – is it going to be delivered soon and will it be value for money.

3.1.3 Olivia Pinkney - Chief Constable, Hampshire Police

The four main points made were:

1. Mental Health section 136 detentions – these take a lot of time to hand over from Police to Health services and this wasn't ideal for the individual involved. In Hampshire, these are now dealt with by the ambulance service. The Commissioner had been helpful in bringing services together.
2. Anti-social behaviour – particularly in the homeless community. Operation Luscombe had been introduced. Through a weekly intervention hub, services acted as one and shared information. Community behaviour warnings were issued, which encouraged behaviour change e.g. aggressive begging.
3. Children and Young People (CYP) protection from harm – Hampshire felt that the most effective way to communicate with CYP was through social media. The initiative encouraged communication and provided a reliable source of information to the public. It also helped to refer or redirect individuals to support if needed. The local Panel had helped to encourage use and awareness.
4. PCC Panels focus on local issues and can bring together services. Panels should think about intervention and prevention early to reduce health inequality, intergenerational decline.

3.1.4 Becci Bryant, Chief Fire Officer, Staffordshire Fire

1. The three main differences for a Commissioner of Fire as opposed to Police were:
 - Commissioner is the employer of all Fire staff – therefore employment responsibilities.
 - They are also responsible for the enforcing authority – Enforcing Legislation (for Police Chief Constable) (Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005).
 - The Chief Fire Officer does not have operational independence as the Chief Constable does.
2. Opportunities:
 - Response speed e.g. high-risk missing persons
 - Protection – Fires role in protection is different to that of the Police – e.g. new build fire regulations – the Commissioner can use political powers/pressure.

- Prevention – early intervention with the community e.g. school education, fire alarms – partnership approach such as sharing data.
- Support services – these are joint in Staffordshire e.g. HR, estates, communications etc. does bring challenges but also benefits.
- Estate – rationalization of built estate

Challenges:

- Collaboration is hard with different cultures. There is a need to understand the other organizations business.
- IT infrastructure
- Budgets
- Establishments – working on a different footprint – e.g. uplift in Police Officers. This isn't happening in the Fire services
- Understanding the 'real' – don't see the work that goes on to prevent
- Trade Unions – Fire have five to work with
- Who and what you scrutinize – Panels need to give some thought to who and how they scrutinize?

During comment by the Panel and the Q/A session the following points were made:

- When the PCC took responsibility for Fire in Staffordshire, the Panel had a number of development sessions to help them understand the differences. The Commissioner provides an update on the Fire Safety Plan.
- One of the main blocks is the lack of data coordination e.g. if an individual put out a fire in the home and is treated for burns, the Fire service want to know so they can help to prevent further fires but the information isn't shared. There's a need for a whole systems approach.
- Combined call centers – IT platforms different but may be the same building.

3.1.5 Frances Crook OBE - Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform

It was generally acknowledged that a child entering the Criminal Justice system was not a positive experience that benefited anyone. The Howard League were looking at crime and problem gambling, which leads to fraud, domestic violence etc.

There was concern over mass recruitment of police officers and the lack of support they are receiving on how to deal with children. The Chief Constable for Hampshire reported that training was now very good and will add to developing the service provided.

3.2 Workshops

3.2.1 Preparing for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Elections 2021 (feedback from your Support Officer).

This item gives me the opportunity to report that the Commissioner's Office has an Officer Working Group addressing all aspects of the election including preparations for the successful candidate taking office. I am invited to those meetings as your representative and will report to your Chairman on any matter that may be relevant to the Panel.

3.2.2 Effective Scrutiny – Discussion Forum (feedback from your Support Officer).

This was a general discussion on what the Panel could consider and the challenge of holding the Commissioner to account and not the Chief Constable.

The four main principles of scrutiny apply to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and were outlined as:

- Providing a critical friend challenge
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard
- Carried out by 'independent minded governors'
- Drives improvement in public services.

What makes a good work programme was also discussed with the following points being agreed as the main influences:

- Is the topic relevant and significant?
- Does the topic fall within the remit of the panel?
- Does it duplicate work already under way
- Is there available statistical and qualitative evidence to support the need for scrutiny
- Can the public be engaged?
- Can the panel make a difference?
- Is the panel the right place to the challenge?

K Walker, M Pattinson.