

Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel

Report of the Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel to all Member Authorities

The Panel is set up under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. Its role is to scrutinise and support the Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire who was elected in 2012

Panel Meetings –Tuesday 15 March 2016

The Panel's meeting was brought forward from April 2016 to avoid Purdah for the election for the Police and Crime Commissioner on Thursday 5 May 2016.

Public Questions

The Commissioner received questions on behalf of members of the public that related to Investigation of crime, changes to the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and specifically the introduction of the Staffordshire Smart Alert system and addressed concern over accessibility to the system by the elderly. He reported on the ease of access to the system and explained that it was intended to encourage younger members of the community to take an interest in community safety and Neighbourhood Watch schemes. He gave assurances that enhanced and additional technology would not reduce visible policing and would release resources to enable greater community engagement.

Formal reports considered by the Panel

Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire Strategy -update

The Commissioner reported the progress on the implementing strategy and on discussions with NHS representatives concerning services for people with mental health issues coming into contact with the police. He reported on a case when Staffordshire Police due to the lack of NHS emergency care had been required to commit considerable resource to the care of one individual. He advised that the incident had subsequently been the subject of an investigation by his Ethics, Audit and Transparency Panel and that his priority was to ensure that the NHS recognised its responsibility in such circumstances and could be held to account. He also reported the recent appointment of the Boeing Company as his Strategic Technology Provider to rationalise the different systems of IT currently in use across the Force area. Projects ongoing included securing a system compatible with other Forces to facilitate information sharing, and improvements to the telephone system used to receive 999 and 101 calls.

Public Engagement theme, Safer, Fairer, United Communities Strategy.

The Commissioner reported on activity undertaken to promote Community Engagement by the Force and to raise the profile and awareness of the role of the Commissioner. He considered visible policing to be key to instilling public confidence in the Police service. The Panel sought clarification of the make-up and role of the Safer Neighbourhood Panels which had been introduced in each local authority area. The Commissioner gave assurances that the Panels were not replacements for Community Engagement Forums but rather provided a local level means of reviewing the performance of the Force. Responding to a request for information on the work of the Victims Gateway, the Commissioner reported that performance information was expected to be available in early summer. Of note was the intention of a number of other PCCs to adopt the Staffordshire model. Members were informed of the recent opening of a refuge for families fleeing domestic abuse and complimented the work of support staff in preparing a families for independent living.

HMIC Inspection of Staffordshire Police.

The Commissioner reported that HMIC had published the report of the 2015 Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspection of Staffordshire Police. He advised of ratings, 'Requires Improvement', 'Good' and 'Good' in respective of three elements and explained that he questioned the methodology used and was in discussions with HMIC concerning this. He also expressed concern that the approach advocated by HMIC for dealing with vulnerable people was prescriptive and did not allow for the application of experience or professional judgement. He also questioned the rational and value of the inspection of an individual agency in isolation when they operated as part of multi-agency service. The Action Plan initiated in response to the low rating for supporting vulnerable people was outlined and the Panel was informed that the HMIC would re-inspect Staffordshire Police in April 2016. Panel members voiced reservations about the limited time spent by HMIC when carrying out the inspection, the rating system and the failure to recognise stronger performance in other areas.

Other matters

The Panel was advised that the Baswich site of the Former Police Headquarters was being marketed as a smaller scale development on the site than previously proposed.

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.

Frank Chapman

Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel Chairman

Staffordshire County Council