

Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

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

To Member Local Authorities

In accordance with agreed practice I am reporting on matters dealt with at a number of meetings held by the Panel on Monday 29 April 2019:

1 Confirmation Hearing for the post of Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) for the Fire and Rescue Service/Authority and the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office.

Since governance responsibility for the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service transferred to the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner he has overseen three posts with Section 151 responsibilities (one for the FRS/Authority, one for the Chief Constable and one for the Commissioners own office). His business case for the transfer of the FRS to him included proposals to streamline that structure. Accordingly, he has approved a new structure with 2 Section 151 Officers – one from the Chief Constable and one with a combined remit covering the FRS/Authority and Commissioner's Office.

Prior to confirming an appointment to the latter post, the Commissioner was required to attend a Confirmation Hearing by the Panel, at which he explains his reasons for the choice of candidate and the Panel is required to decide whether or not to support the proposed appointment.

The Confirmation Hearing considered the proposed appointment of Mr David Greensmith to the combined Section 151 Officer post. Mr Greensmith already serves as the Fire and Rescue Service/Authority Section 151 Officer and demonstrated a wealth of experience in public and private sector financial management, including overseeing business transformation and managing budget reductions.

The Panel were unanimous in their support for the proposed appointment and their confidence in Mr Greensmith's ability to fulfil the role. In submitting their formal view to the Commissioner the Panel decided to refer to the reallocation of some of Mr Greensmith's previous responsibilities to provide him with the capacity to undertake the Commissioner's element of the new post. The Commissioner will be asked to report in 6 months' time on the progress of those arrangements.

2 Informal Workshop re Policing Numbers

In January each year the Panel is required to consider the Commissioner's proposed Precept and has a right of veto if it considers it to be too high or too low.

For the 2018/19 Precept the Panel supported the Commissioner's wish to take advantage of provision for additional charges as part of the resulting increase in

income was earmarked for the recruitment of 69 additional officers (that number to be phased in over the 2018/19 and 2019/20 periods). In considering the 2019/20 Precept proposals, the Panel were unclear on the actual numbers of officers on the Police Establishment and the additional number to be recruited. A Workshop was therefore held to look at Policing numbers in detail.

The lead presenter was Deputy CC Nick Baker who explained the changing demands on policing, at a local and national level, and the differing skills now required of personnel, particularly in relation to more complex crime such as cyber crime. He reported on the changing profile of the Force Establishment explaining that increases in numbers of warranted officers per se did not necessarily give maximum return/effect from additional expenditure. Many non-warranted staff were performing 'policing' functions such as Forensic investigations and elements of CID investigations. That said DCC Baker acknowledged the public's wish for visible policing and referred to the Chief Constables new Operating Model which aimed to increase visibility and public confidence. The Commissioner's commitment to investment in neighbourhood teams was a key consideration in that new Operating Model.

Details were given of the Force Establishment overall and the anticipated numbers of retirements, leavers, transferees and recruits. Aside from the additional posts agreed as part of Precept proposals, the 'natural' cause of changes to workforce numbers necessitated an ongoing recruitment programme.

Assurances were given that recruitment of the additional 69 officers was underway. In addition, following further Precept increases for 2019/20 further monies had been allocated for 19 more Officers. The recruitment and training programmes for all of the new posts were outlined in order to explain the lead in period for their operational effectiveness.

Panel members queried the overall Establishment total quoted by the Force as it differed from that recorded by the Home Office. The Commissioner agreed to clarify and report back on the base figure and the effect on that figure of the re design of the Force profile which had taken place as part of the Chief Constable's wider Change Programme.

3 Quarterly Meeting

The main items considered were:

- The Commissioner's approval to Capital funding of £17.179m for Phase 2 of the Niche (Records Management System) . This is part of the IT Transformation Programme being overseen/delivered by Boeing to improve the capability and capacity of the Force systems. This project will replace 12 separate records management systems in use by the Force and will enable information sharing with other Forces utilising the Niche system.

- Custody Detention Services – The Commissioner’s decision to bring Custody Services back in house in order to give more flexibility in service delivery and better value for money. Responding to a request fro his views on outsourcing services, the Commissioner considered that for each service area a decision on in-house or outsourced provision had to be made on individual merit.
- Safer, Fairer, United Communities Strategy: The Commissioner particularly highlighted the work of the Victims Gateway which had given support, increasingly of a complex nature, in response to 50,000+ incidents; the success of the SPACE Scheme and his hopes to engage 30,000 young people in this year’s projects.
- Modern Policing –The Police and the Fire and Rescue Estate was being reviewed in view of the condition of some buildings and the reducing level of demand for face to face contact with Police personnel. Proposals were being drawn up to share facilities were appropriate with discussions underway with the PFI provider of Community Fire Stations on the possible expansion of the use of those facility
- Safer Neighbourhood Panels – following a review of the organisation and effectiveness of the Panels, the Commissioner proposed to transfer responsibility for them to his Office and to appoint a Panel Co-ordinator to lead on their organisation and management.
- Fire and Rescue Services – An interim one-year Fire and Rescue Plan was being drawn up and would be reported to the next Panel meeting. A full 4 year Plan will subsequently be developed for the period 2020-2024 which will align with the next elections for a Commissioner.
- Enabling Services – a review was underway of the enabling services for the Fire and Rescue and Policing services to identify common functions and proposals are being drawn up to create a single service. The finance functions are expected to become one service around late 2019/20.
- Sprinklers in residential buildings with five or more storeys – the Commissioner voiced his support for the installation of sprinklers at the building stage and was currently investigating how he could contribute to campaigns for changes to both legislation and to the attitude adopted by the construction sector.

For more information on these meetings or on the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in general please contact Julie Plant (01785 276135 e mail Julie.plant@staffordshire.gov.uk) or Helen Phillips (01785 276143 or helen.phillips@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.

Stephen Sweeney

Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Chairman

Staffordshire County Council