

Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel

Report of the Secretary of the Police and Crime Panel

To All Member Authorities

Since the establishment of the Police and Crime Panel in 2012 it has been usual practice for the Chairman to report to member authorities on matters dealt with by the Panel, highlighting issues of wider interest and/or implications.

The Chairman retired as a County Councillor at the beginning of May therefore, as Secretary to the Panel, I am submitting this report of Panel meetings held on 26 April and 8 May 2017:

'Ordinary' Panel Meeting – 26 April 2017

As it was the Chairman's last meeting it was appropriate that a number of agenda items were on progress made on matters previously considered by the Panel, including the HMIC report on their PEEL (Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy) inspection of the Force 2016, and the External Audit of the OPCC and Force Accounts for 2015/16.

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to the **HMIC 2016 PEEL inspections** (Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy) of the Staffordshire Force specifically the overall rating of 'Requires Improvement' which had been given for the 'Effectiveness' element. He explained that that rating was a culmination of inspections of four areas including 'protecting those who are vulnerable and supporting victims' which, whilst originally graded as 'inadequate' had been amended to 'Requires Improvement' following his representations. He reported that the revised grading did not reflect the more positive narrative and de-brief given by the HMIC and reported on discussions held with the HMIC on the processes adopted in assessing the effectiveness of the Force and the inconsistency of approach between different Forces. HMIC reports contributed to his scrutiny of the Force performance and detailed monitoring arrangements adopted including a performance framework and the implementation of an Action Plan drawn up in response to the PEEL findings.

On the **External Audit of the Accounts 2015/16**, Panel were reminded that the Auditor had given a qualified opinion citing concerns that due to staff turnover in the finance teams for the OPCC and Force financial planning might not be based on as robust, timely information as would be expected. The Commissioner and his Director of Finance and Performance reported on a number of measures introduced to improve financial management including a review of the IT systems in use and the potential for their improvement. Both were satisfied that matters raised by the auditor were being addressed and that whilst the necessary financial management measures had previously existed, they were now better able to evidence their existence.

The Panel and Commissioner also discussed in detail the provisions in the new **Policing and Crime Act 2017** for the integration of the Police and Fire and Rescue

Services. The Commissioner reported that his Business case was currently being compiled, would be consulted upon and, if supported, implementation would hopefully commence in spring/early summer 2018. The consequences for the Panel of integration were noted, most specifically the possible extension of its membership to bring in expertise in Fire and Rescue matters.

The new Act also permits the Commissioner to have more direct management of **complaints against the Force**, with a number of options offering varying degrees of involvement. The Panel briefly discussed the pros and cons of the options with the Commissioner holding the view that a degree of independence from the Force might offer a more transparent system, whilst acknowledging that for some cases the investigative skills possessed by Force officers was required. The Commissioner agreed to report to Panel on his final choice of system.

Other items on the agenda included progress on implementing and reviewing the Commissioners **Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire strategy** and discussion on **decisions published by the Commissioner**. Amongst the latter was a decision to fund studies by Kier Ltd on the feasibility of enhancement works to 5 OPCC properties. The Panel questioned the decision and the valuations on which it had been based.

Confirmation Hearing – 8 May 2017

The Panel held a further meeting to consider the Commissioner's wish to appoint Mr Gareth Morgan as Chief Constable for Staffordshire. The post of Chief Constable is one of a number of posts for which the Panel has a statutory duty to hold a Confirmation Hearing. In this case the Panel has the power to veto the proposed appointment.

The Commissioner reported on the recruitment and selection processes he'd followed, including the involvement of staff and young persons' fora.

The Hearing procedure followed by the Panel was in accordance with guidance issued by the Local Government Association and involved the Panel questioning the Commissioner on the selection process he'd adopted, and asking questions of the candidate to help assess his 'professional competence' and 'personal independence'.

The Panel were impressed by Mr Morgan's decisive and candid answers and his commitment to Staffordshire. At the conclusion of the Hearing the Panel agreed that Mr Morgan was suitable for the post and recommended to the Commissioner that he proceed with the appointment.

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