

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel Meeting held on 3 July 2018

Present: David Williams (Chairman)

Ann Edgeller
Peter Jackson
Carl Bennett
Randolph Conteh

Paul Darby (Co-Optee)
Roger Lees (Substitute)
Mr K. Walker (Co-Optee)

Also in attendance: Susan Finney (ETAP)

Apologies: Stephen Doyle, Brian Edwards, Jill Waring and Simon Gaskin

PART ONE

1. Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED: That David Williams be appointed Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED: That Paul Darby be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

4. Minutes of the 'Ordinary' and Confirmation Hearing meetings held on 23 April 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Panel and of the Confirmation Hearing both held on 23 April 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

5. 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 to members..

Referring to decision ref: 2017/18 – 20, members sought clarification of the reasons for additional expenditure on the recently completed Lichfield Police Station, enquiring about the possible provision of a Custody Suite at that site. The Commissioner explained that the facility had been developed to provide a hub, particularly for Forensic Services and explained that the Business Case for the building of a further Custody Suite in the County was not economically viable.

On the issue of the Police Estate the Commissioner was asked to report on any future proposals for Police Station closures. Without specifying sites the Commissioner referred to the need to rationalise the Estate and to maximise the opportunities for shared facilities with other public sector agencies.

6. Questions to the PCC from Members of the Public

There were no questions from the public on this occasion.

7. Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel - Implications for Panel of transfer of Fire Governance to PCC

The Secretary reported that transfer of Fire Governance responsibility to the Police and Crime Commissioner was due to take place with effect from 1 August 2018. As a consequence this Panel would become the Police, Fire and Crime Panel for Staffordshire and would have additional roles and responsibilities in relation to the scrutiny of the Commissioner's Plans and Decisions in the capacity of Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Secretary outlined the requirement for the Panel to include amongst its membership a degree of knowledge and expertise on Fire and Rescue Services and reported on the intention to commission further training to complement that recently provided by the Local Government Association. In due course the Panel would also need to review the number and frequency of meetings to provide for the additional workload resulting from the extended remit once that workload had been assessed.

Referring to immediate actions required of members, the Secretary submitted, for approval, draft revised Terms of Reference and Procedural Rules for the Panel aimed at reflecting the new remit. Taking account of issues raised during the recent LGA training event the Secretary sought approval to an update to the draft Terms of Reference to include the requirement to scrutinise the Fire and Rescue Integrated Risk Management Plan or equivalent document.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and proposed Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules for the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, including the addition to the Terms to include scrutiny of the Integrated Risk Management Plan be approved.

8. Annual Report on the Management of Complaints by/on behalf of the Panel

The Secretary to the Panel presented the 2017/18 Annual Report on the Management of Complaints, Purported Complaints or Conduct Matters against the Police and Crime Commissioner and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. In the main, the management of such complaints was delegated to the Secretary. He reported that whilst 2 complaints had been received neither had been entered into the formal process as they didn't meet the necessary criteria.

RESOLVED:- that the report be noted.

9. Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel - Home Office Grant 2017/18

The Secretary to the Panel presented his report on the allocation of the Home Office grant for the running costs of the Panel during 2017/18. The grant comprised £53,300 for administration and £11,040 for member expenses. A total of £60,622.04 had been claimed leaving £3,717.96 unclaimed.

Discussing the underspend Panel members noted the intention to increase the allocation to training to enable the Panel to fulfil its new Fire Governance scrutiny role.

The Secretary reported that the Home Office had yet to give notice of grant levels for 2018/19.

RESOLVED: - that the allocation of the Home Office grant 2017/18 be noted and published in accordance with conditions of that grant.

10. OPCC Update on transfer of Governance of the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

The Commissioner gave an update on the progress of preparations for the anticipated transfer to him of Fire Governance responsibility from 1 August 2018.

For the immediate future the Commissioner was focussing on holding briefing meetings with all service employees. Post 1 August he would be prioritising moves to rationalise support services with the aim of developing one support function for the Police and Fire. He stressed that each service would remain operationally independent. In the longer term the Commissioner was seeking to widen the role of Fire Service personnel however there were national influences which affected local arrangements. He added that the Chief Constable's focus remained on delivering the new operational model aimed at increasing policing visibility.

Commenting on the progress of the transfer of the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service the Commissioner commended the positive approach being adopted by all levels of personnel within the service.

RESOLVED: That the Commissioner's update report be noted.

11. Annual Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner 2017/18

The Commissioner submitted his draft Annual Report 2017/18 for comment by the Panel.

In reporting on its content the Commissioner emphasised the ways in which the demands on policing had changed during his period of office due to the changes in the scale and complexity of the types of crime committed. By way of example the Commissioner reported that people are 20 times more likely to be a victim of crime online than in person. Additionally, public confidence in reporting crime such as serious sexual offences and domestic abuse had significantly increased, again placing greater demands on police resources.

The Annual Report detailed projects being delivered under each of the five themes adopted by the Commissioner in his Policing Strategy namely: Modern Policing, Early Intervention, Supporting Victims and Witnesses, Managing Offenders and Promoting Public Confidence.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be noted and the Panels key comments during discussion on its contents comprise the formal response the Commissioner.

12. Safer, Fairer United Communities for Staffordshire

a) General Update and Public Confidence Theme

Having discussed the Commissioner's Annual Report in detail (see minute 11 above) the Panel focussed their comments on the format of the Strategy updates with the OPCC requested to provide more specific information on progress made against set aims rather than overall summaries/position statements.

RESOLVED: That on behalf of the Panel, Mr Walker hold discussions with the Chief of Staff in the OPCC on the format for future monitoring/progress reports.

13. Staffordshire OPCC and Police Force Group Financial Position 2017/18

The Commissioner submitted an update on the provisional financial outturn for both the OPCC and the Force for 2017/18, as reported in the Group accounts, which showed a final (Group) outturn of £181,271m giving an overspend of £2,679m (1.5%).

Members queried a number of apparently wide variations in estimated and actual outturn amounts under major spend headings including those for IT and Transformation Projects. It was reported that some changes were due to a revision of accounting techniques in accordance with Codes of Practice. Other variations were attributable to the timing of financial transactions and receipt of Capital generated from land/property disposal.

Further budget lines were queried including the cost of the Commissioner's Office. Replying the Commissioner referred to the need to view his office as a Commissioning Organisation responsible for the provision of major service areas. He highlighted a transfer of funding from his Office to the Force primarily to support three specific areas of expenditure.

The Panel referred to their last meeting during which a Confirmation Hearing had been held for the post of Interim Chief Finance Officer and queries had been raised with the Commissioner on the reasons for the seemingly regular change of personnel in this post. Responding the Commissioner acknowledged the Panel's concerns and reported that there had been historical issues to address in terms of the financial management arrangements adopted by the Force who provided the majority of support to the Chief Finance Officer. He added that action to address those issues was nearing completion resulting in a more robust service. Most recently he had sought Interim appointments in view of his bid to secure joint governance of Police and Fire and the uncertainty about future requirements as shared support services were developed.

RESOLVED: That the financial position 2017/18 and the Commissioner’s response to concerns around the post of Chief Financial Officer be noted

14. Questions to the PCC by Panel members

Removal of Travellers

A member questioned the Commissioner on the perceived delays in police action to remove Travellers from land in their area. The Commissioner referred to the misconception that the removal of Travellers was a Police responsibility. Following his own enquiries into responsibility for dealing with recent issues at various locations in the County, a new advice note was being issued to the Police and to Local Authorities detailing the responsibilities of each. Members acknowledged the Travellers’ own familiarity with their legal rights and responsibilities and those of the Agencies. The fast – track system operated by Stoke-on-Trent City Council was cited as a successful approach.

Safer Neighbourhood Panels

The Commissioner was questioned on the ‘rumour’ that OPCC funding for Safer Neighbourhood Panels was to be withdrawn. The Commissioner reported his disappointment at the differing levels of commitment amongst local authorities to the organisation of the Panels as was expected of them. He was reviewing the degree to which the Panels were providing Value for Money and quoted those Panels operating within Stoke-on-Trent as examples which met his expectations.

Other Issues

Members of the Panel also questioned/sought the views of the Commissioner on the following issues and received the responses indicated:

Question	Response
Can the PCC explain why grant aid to Women’s Aid appear to have been reallocated to Victims Support	The matter is the subject of legal proceedings
Is the PCC addressing the alleged practice of senior officers retiring from the Force and immediately returning to posts in a civilian capacity	This is not practice and the appointment referred to by the member has been fully reviewed and was found to have been made via an open, transparent and accountable selection process.
What performance levels are being achieved by the 101 service	Performance varies depending on the demand for the 999 service which has to take priority. Caller to 101 are advised to take advantage of the call-back facility.
What progress has been made on the sale of the former Police HQ site	The sale is agreed and due diligence processes are now under way. The Capital Receipt will be forthcoming in due course.

15. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

The Secretary submitted details of dates and the work programme for future Panel meetings commenting on the possible need to hold additional meetings together with training events in connection with the Panel's extended remit.

RESOLVED: That the current Work Programme be noted.

Chairman