
Police, Fire & Crime Panel – Public Question

Questions Posed:

1. Should or will criminal proceedings be taken against the individuals and groups of people who are responsible for the state and position of the Staffordshire Police Force.
2. How will you provide evidence that clarity, transparency and professionalism has been or will be at the front and centre of policing?

Panel Member: Public Question – Mr Bradbury

Question Date: 16/02/2021

Commissioner Response:

1. Should or will criminal proceedings be taken against the individuals and groups of people who are responsible for the state and position of the Staffordshire Police Force.

It is assumed your question refers to the performance issues highlighted in recent inspections of Staffordshire Police by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. This is not a matter for criminal proceedings, but the Commissioner shares your concerns that the force needs to improve, and identified this in his Police and Crime Plan. He recruited a new Chief Constable in December 2021 who is leading the force in bringing about rapid improvements. This was reflected in the recent re-inspection in December 2022, which found the force's efforts to improve the service are moving in the right direction across many areas.

I will describe the monitoring process undertaken by HMICFRS and the governance arrangements the Commissioner has in place to oversee improvements.

Routine monitoring identifies apparent issues for closer scrutiny. Some of these will be outside the control of the force and local policing body, or will already have been tackled; but some may be indicators of systemic or management failings in the force. The decision on whether to follow up any concerns with the force and local policing body rests with the HMI who leads on HMICFRS's relationship with that force area.

There are two stages in HMICFRS's monitoring process:

- Scan – The default phase of monitoring, the scanning phase uses data and information from a range of sources to highlight poor or deteriorating performance and identify potential areas of concern. Quarterly monitoring will be undertaken and a summary monitoring report produced that will be discussed with HMIs and, if possible causes for concern are found, at the regular monitoring group meetings.
- Engage – If a force is not responding to a cause of concern, or if it is not succeeding in managing, mitigating or eradicating the cause of concern, it is probable it will be moved to the Engage phase. In the Engage phase, forces will

develop an improvement plan to address the specific cause(s) of concern that has caused them to be placed in the advanced phase of the monitoring process. The force may receive support from external organisations such as the College of Policing or the National Police Chiefs' Council, brokered by HMICFRS.

Two causes for concern were highlighted by HMICFRS in June 2022 which led to Staffordshire Police being placed in the Engage phase:

- The force needs to improve how it identifies and assesses vulnerability at first point of contact.
- The force needs to make sure that it carries out effective investigations and that it gives victims the support they need.

Areas for improvement were also identified in a separate inspection of the force's child protection services.

Staffordshire Police is one of six forces currently in the Engage phase.

In the Engage phase, forces develop an improvement plan to address the specific cause(s) of concern that has caused them to be placed in the advanced phase of the monitoring process. Support is provided by external organisations such as the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council, brokered by HMICFRS. Monthly update reports are submitted to HMICFRS and the Staffordshire Chief Constable and PFCC attend Policing Performance Oversight Group (PPOG) meetings to update on progress against action plans.

Through this process, HMICFRS consider progress made against causes of concern, using the following tests:

- (a) Does the force recognise the cause of concern and understand the implications?
- (b) What is the prospect that the force will succeed in managing, mitigating or eradicating the cause of concern (taking into account capacity and capability)?
- (c) Is the cause of concern likely to be short-lived or enduring?
- (d) The need for public protection to be attained by the force becoming more efficient and effective above the stated cause of concern;
- (e) Public confidence in the force; and
- (f) The public law requirement of fairness.

Additionally, the Staffordshire Commissioner has Performance and Governance Frameworks in place to ensure robust arrangements are in place to ensure the Chief Constable is held to account for the performance of the force. These can be found on our website, as can links to papers for and video recordings of the Public Performance Meetings the Commissioner holds with the Chief Constable. In these meetings, the Chief Constable sets out the plans he has put in place to bring about the required improvements in service delivery.

In addition to the standard performance monitoring arrangements, the Commissioner's Office has enhanced measures in place during the Engage phase, including:

- Active monitoring of areas for improvement and performance related information and additional performance briefings for the Commissioner
- The Chief Executive attends monthly Gold Command meetings established to oversee progress with the HMICFRS Liaison Officer
- The Chief Executive meets weekly with the Deputy Chief Constable with HMICFRS as a standing agenda item

- The Commissioner and the Chief Executive meet weekly with the Chief Constable and his Deputy with HMICFRS as a standing agenda item
- The Commissioner holds informal meetings with HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams
- The Commissioner and the Chief Executive meet regularly with the HMICFRS Liaison officer

Additionally, the Police, Fire and Crime Panel have a responsibility to scrutinise the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, to promote openness in the transaction of Police and Fire and Rescue business and also to support the Commissioner in the effective exercise of their functions'. At their meeting on Tuesday 21st February, the Panel will scrutinise the arrangements the Commissioner has in place to monitor the performance of Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service to hold them to account on behalf of the public.

There are robust arrangements in place to ensure accountability which exceed the requirements set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and reflect the importance of rectifying current deficiencies.

2. How will you provide evidence that clarity, transparency and professionalism has been or will be at the front and centre of policing?

The Commissioner set out in his Police and Crime Plan that openness and transparency are a central part of his approach. In addition to the arrangements set out above, the Commissioner has a duty to ensure robust Corporate Governance arrangements are in place. There is a Joint Corporate Governance Framework in place between the Commissioner’s Office and Staffordshire Police and each organisation publishes an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which can be found on the respective websites. The framework is based on the seven principles of good governance and details activities carried out to meet each principle:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Contact Officer

Author:	Louise Clayton
Position:	Chief Executive
Date:	20/02/2023