

## **Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel**

Report by the Chairman of the Staffordshire Police Crime Panel to Staffordshire County Council

Thursday 10 October 2013

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

Outlined below is a summary of the work of the Panel since my last report to Council in March 2013

### **Panel Meetings**

**20 May 2013**

**1.Report** - The Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel held two meetings on 20 May 2013.

#### **Confirmatory Hearing**

The Confirmatory Hearing was to consider the appointment of Mr Simon Crick as the Chief Financial Officer to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The Panel heard from and questioned the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), his Chief of Staff and Mr Crick, considering the criteria for the job and the experience, skills and abilities of the candidate. The Panel have produced a report for the PCC supporting the appointment of Mr Crick.

#### **Panel Meeting**

This Police and Crime Panel meeting was the first at which there was an opportunity to take written questions to the PCC from members of the public who live or work within the constituent authorities of the Staffordshire PCP. One question was received from the Chairman of Featherstone and Brinsford Parish Council in connection with policing levels in that area.

The Panel also considered the following agenda items:

Staffordshire Police Force Performance 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013.

People Services – Performance Assessment Unit 4th Quarterly and end of year report 2012/13  
Use of resources – year end data.

PCP Complaint procedure, with the Panel having a responsibility for dealing with non-criminal complaints against the PCC and his Deputy and giving consideration to the procedure they wish to adopt. Work programme planning 2013/14

**28 June 2013**

### **Informal Panel meeting**

**2. Report** - Police and Crime Commissioner Mathew Ellis and Glyn Dixon Chief of Staff appeared before the Panel, Sue Arnold Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner was as an observer.

The Chairman referred to the need for the Panel to make recommendations on the draft Police and Crime Plan..

Addressing the panel, the Police and Crime Commissioner articulated a new approach to tackling crime and the causes of crime throughout Staffordshire. The emphasis being the involvement of all sections of the community and not just the police, partners and other stakeholders.

Glyn Dixon gave a presentation on Safer, Fairer, United Communities, the Police and Crime Commissioners 2013 -2018 strategy. He outlined the strategic partnership plans making specific reference to the Health and Wellbeing Board plans, Police and Crime plans and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

He identified the four main priorities of early intervention and tackling root causes, making it easier for victims and witnesses to receive the support they need, managing offenders to prevent offending and reducing the likelihood of reoffending and making sure everything contributes to individuals and communities feeling safer and reassured.

The Panel decided to hold a special workshop to consider the most up to date version of the Plan in order to formally respond on 5th August.

**19 July 2013**

### **Police and Crime Panel – Workshop to consider the draft Police and Crime Plan**

**3. Report** - Members were informed that the Police and Crime plan should determine, direct and communicate the commissioner's priorities during the period in office. Legislation requires the plan to set out the Commissioner's police and crime objectives for the area, the resources to be made available, the means by which the Chief officer of Police is to report to the Commissioner on the provision of policing and how that provision is to be measured and the

amount of and conditions attached to crime and disorder reduction grants to be made by the Commissioner.

Police and Crime Plans from West Mercia, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Gloucestershire were circulated to Members for information and reference.

### **Comments made by Panel Members**

The Panel supported the 4 priorities referred to in the Plan and highlighted additional references they'd wish to see under each (eg. Supporting Victims and Witnesses – reference to the good work currently being carried out by numerous agencies). However, the Panel felt that more information was needed on how the priorities would be achieved, including clear objectives, targets and performance management measures. Consequently they queried the extent to which the contents of the Plan met with the statutory requirements and provided for public accountability and scrutiny.

Additional comments included concern that the Plan was not Staffordshire specific, did not refer to strategic policing obligations and had limited information on budgets and governance.

### **5 August 2013**

**4. Report** - The Panel met on 5th August to agree the formal response to the Police and Crime Plan, as based on the workshop discussions detailed above. That response was subsequently sent to the PCC and published on both his and the County Councils websites..

Other items listed on the agenda included the PCC's Annual Report for the period November 2012 to March 2013 and quarterly reports on the performance of the Staffordshire Force.

Questions from the Panel included:

- Straight Talk Sessions with police officers.
- IT improvements intended to free up officers time and provide real time information. Officers will have remote access to information whilst on patrol removing need to return to the station
- Staffordshire Police Cadet Scheme, how funded, recruitment across all ethnic groups and training. In the main local business to be targeted for donations "accreditation scheme" to be introduced. Training to be provided by existing police staff at no extra cost.

- Regulation A19 compulsory retirement of police officers abandoned by Staffordshire. The policy had had a detrimental effect on Police moral. The cessation of the policy together with the Commissioner's decision to instigate recruitment had served to address operational risk to the Force.
- Monitoring police performance and the PCC's wish to introduce more meaningful measurement systems away from a target chasing culture. (A presentation on the new systems to be given to the Panel).

### 26 September 2013

**5. Report** - The Panel held a special meeting primarily to consider the results of the Police and Crime Commissioners public consultation and response to the Panels formal comments on his Police and Crime Plan – 'Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire 2013/18.

The Panel had earlier considered the contents of the draft Plan in the context of legislative requirements and had highlighted in their response to the Commissioner the areas of omission/concern. The Commissioner reported to the 26 September meeting on amendments to be made to the document in response to some of the issues raised with him however he stressed that the aim of the document was to provide an overarching strategy on how to address crime and disorder and improve the Criminal Justice System through a multi agency co-ordinated approach.

On the question of wider public consultation on the document, the Commissioner reported a pleasing level of interest and support from most sectors of the community commenting on further work to be carried out to address the limited engagement in the exercise by the business sector. A large majority of respondents supported the 4 priorities in the strategy.

The Panel also considered a report on early work by the Commissioners Chief Financial Officer on the preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2020 and the assumptions being made in terms of Council tax income and grants. It was agreed that officers from the County Council and the Commissioners Office liaise on budget preparation.

A presentation was also given on new Performance Measurement processes being developed as part of the Commissioners wish to move away from a target driven culture within the Police Force. Examples were given of how the current performance targets could result in a distorted picture of crime and police activity and lead to resources being directed to areas of less priority. The new performance measures would involve the establishment of 'tolerance bands' within which performance would fluctuate but remain acceptable. As the

Commissioners strategy gained momentum in reducing crime the tolerance bands would narrow.

A general discussion session with the Commissioner included reference to work underway to secure out of hours support for officers on duty from mental health professionals to prevent them having to deal with situations on which they were not qualified to make decisions when attending an incident involving a person with mental health problems.

### **Further Information**

The webpage for the Police and Crime Panel can be accessed from the following link:

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/yourcouncil/staffordshire-police-and-crime-panel/introductiontothestaffordshirepoliceandcrimepanel.aspx>

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.

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**Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel Chairman**  
Staffordshire County Council