

Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

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

To Staffordshire County Council

In accordance with agreed practice, I am reporting on matters dealt with by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel at its meeting on 3 July 2023 at 10am.

The main items of business were:

Councillor Bernard Peters was **appointed Chairman** of the Panel for the ensuring year.

Councillor Richard Cox was **appointed Vice Chairman** of the Panel for the ensuring year.

Councillor Williams **declared an interest** in the Commissioners annual report item as his employer had provided services to the SPACE scheme in the past.

Details were submitted of **decisions published by the Commissioner** since the last Panel meeting.

The Panel considered the **questions ask by members of the public** and the Commissioners written response.

Consideration of the Commissioners Annual Report 2023/24.

The Annual report was presented by the Commissioner who explained the progress made against his strategic plans.

The Commissioner highlighted the following from his report:

- Commitment to the SPACE programme had been made for a further two years.
- Road safety, including safe vehicles, ANPR Cameras, speeding and vehicle crime remained a priority.
- New Leadership in both the Police and Fire Service was leading to improved confidence in local services.
- Financial forecasts and resources, as highlighted in the annual report, were promising.
- The recruitment of additional police officers was on track to increase by 250 by the end of May 2024.

The Commissioner thanked the Fire and Rescue and the Police Services; all their staff; volunteers; his Deputy; and the Commissioners team for their support over the past months and helping to provide services in challenging and demanding times.

Following the Commissioners presentation and questioning from the Panel, the following summary of information was shared. This was in addition to that provided in the written report:

- Demand for Police services had been managed locally based on knowledge of the area, its challenges and work force capacity.
- Work was taking place with partners to ensure that the right and most appropriate services attended incidents. The Commissioner assured the Panel that emergency services would continue to respond to call outs but it was hoped that specialist services would be able to assist in a more timely way. When more detail was available, all partners, including local authorities would be consulted.
- It was felt that to mention the behaviour of other forces in the Commissioners foreword, was inappropriate as there were also issues locally which needed addressing. The Commissioner agreed to revisit the wording in the annual report as it was not the intention to downplay any problems which Staffordshire services may have. There was a need to reassure the community that these issues were being addressed.
- The recruitment of officers was reflecting the community in terms of ethnicity and gender and it was essential that people felt comfortable in their workplace.
- Anti-social behaviour was a priority and full access to CCTV and surveillance equipment was critical. There were many operating systems and managing the amount and type of information coming into the system was challenging. The project this year would be to understand and develop ways of working together to establish what was available and how it could be used. It was felt that Community Safety Partnerships were in an ideal place to understand local issues and through working together could focus on local solutions.
- Technology and consistency within the Fire service was highlighted as a particular issue by the panel, with some local teams having to print out information before they could respond to incidents as they didn't have smart technology. The Commissioner explained that different information storage systems meant that it might be some time before all information was available electronically, but it was confirmed that all front-line services now had smart phones and the service was working its way through the other issues raised in the inspection report.
- Fire crews of three were being piloted in South Staffs, for on call crews. These were normally used as a backup response

and wouldn't normally be expected to be working alone. The results of the pilot would come to the panel in due course.

- Public perception and the need to address incorrect social media was raised.
- The Commissioner felt that the service had improved but was not yet where he wanted it to be. The engage process and support offered was welcomed but the speed of change was frustrating for all concerned, this was despite all the hard work and effort from those involved. Economic factors also had an impact on delivery.
- The need to build public confidence in the 101 system was discussed. The Commissioner reported that a web site was being developed to enable non urgent issues to be reported on line. Work was continuing on the answering calls withing a responsible time.
- The need for the public to see base line data, so that they could see improvement, was raised. Members were reminded that the Commissioner held regular meetings with the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to hold them to account. There were also public performance which could be viewed or watched via [Public Meetings - Staffordshire Commissioner \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk)

The Panel agreed to respond formally to the Annual report including the feedback provided during the meeting, particularly relating to the public perception, performance and fire service pilots and technology. Information on the pilot scheme in South Staffs (three member crews) would be reported back to the panel at an appropriate time.

The Panel received the annual report which provided information on the **Home Office grant (2022/23)** allocated to the Host authority which was intended to meet the costs of the administrative support and management services of the panel and Panel member expenses.

The Panel received the annual report which provided information on the **number of complaints** referred to the panel which relate to the personal conduct of the Commissioner and/or his Deputy.

The Panels work programme was considered. It was suggested that the panel training dates should be added to the work programme to ensure transparency.

Webcast can be found at [Browse meetings - Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel - Staffordshire County Council](#)

For more information on these meetings or on the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in general please contact Mandy Pattinson
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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.

Councillor Bernard Peters (Chair)
Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel