

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel Meeting held on 1 February 2016

Present: Frank Chapman (Chairman)

Carl Bennett
Randolph Conteh
Paul Darby (Co-Optee)
Brian Edwards

Colin Greatorex (Vice-Chairman)
Bernard Peters
Mr K. Walker (Co-Optee)

Also in attendance: Chief Constable Jane Sawyers (Staffordshire Police)

Apologies: Stephen Doyle, Ann Edgeller and Tony Kearon

PART ONE

41. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

42. Minutes of the meetings held on 4 November 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of both the Confirmation Hearing and ‘Ordinary’ Panel meeting held on 4 November 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

43. Questions to the PCC

There were no questions to the PCC from members of the public on this occasion.

44. Police and Crime Commissioner - Draft Budget and Precept 2016/17

The Secretary to the Panel reported on the Panel’s duty to consider the Police and Crime Commissioners proposed Budget and Precept for 2016/17 explaining that the requirement to support or veto the proposal and the processes which had to be followed if the veto was exercised.

In presenting his proposed Budget and Precept for 2016/17 the Commissioner reported a total core grant for central government of £106.424million, a 0.57% (£610k) reduction on the previous year. This compared to the anticipated 5% reduction and followed a Home Office review of police funding in December 2015. Originally a reduction in core funding of 18-20% in Staffordshire over the next 4 years had been expected however following the review this figure is reduced to around 6%. Budget pressures continued to increase including changes to National Insurance contributions and the need to invest in ICT and the change programme.

For the balance of revenue funding for 2016/17 the Commissioner proposed a nil increase in the Precept, reflecting his view that maximum benefit was still to be realised from existing precept levels by improving efficiency however he commented that he was near reaching that maximum benefit and could not therefore guarantee a nil increase in

future years. An additional consideration would be central governments move towards local funding of services.

During discussion on the proposed budget the Panel queried the £4.2million reduction in allocation for Police Officer pay seeking assurances on the level of front line/visible policing. The PCC explained that the reduction amounted to approximately 190 officers but that front line resourcing would be increased by a net figure of 6 officers. Savings were mainly as a result of transferring warranted officers from back office functions to the front line. He gave an assurance that operational resourcing was determined in consultation with the Chief Constable.

Other Panel enquires related to the increased budgetary provision for the Commissioners Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel and the progress of the Enablers Programme (transforming support functions) including discussions on collaboration between the Police and Fire and Rescue Services.

The PCC explained that due to the widening remit of the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel additional professional support was needed hence an increase in costs. The Enablers Programme was progressing by working with partners including the Penda Property Partnership. Discussions on collaboration were progressing well with joint working already taking place in some areas such as vehicle maintenance.

The Commissioners Capital budget for 2016/17 provided for expenditure of £21.695 million, over £12million of which would be a borrowing requirement. The Commissioner acknowledged the comments made by Panel members on the potential affect on the overall budget of an increase in interest rates for that borrowing but felt that it was justified in order to implement his ICT transformation programme.

In accordance with statutory requirement, the Commissioner Chief Finance Officer submitted her view on the proposed budget and confirmed her opinion that the proposals were robust and the level of reserves were adequate.

RESOLVED – That the Panel support the proposed Budget and Precept for 2016/17 and a formal report be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner and published confirming that view.

45. HMIC Inspection of Staffordshire Police - Vulnerability

The Chief Constable, Mrs Jane Sawyers, had been invited to attend the meeting for this item.

HMIC had recently published the outcome of their inspection of how effective the Staffordshire Force is at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable and supporting victims. The report had rated the Force to be 'inadequate' as a result of which the Chief Constable was required to provide an Action Plan setting out how the issues identified by HMIC would be improved.

The Commissioner reported on his oversight arrangements of the Force Action Plan. In doing so he expressed disappointment at the methodology adopted by HMIC for inspections as he did not consider that an inspection of a single agency involved in a

multi agency service provision could give a fair reflection of activity and performance. He continued to discuss the report with representatives of HMIC in order to gain a full understanding of their approach and findings.

The Chief Constable explained that the HMIC inspection process had taken place during a 1 week period in June 2015 and had looked at three areas: Domestic Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation and 'Missing'. The overall rating was based on the lowest performing area, which for Staffordshire was Domestic Abuse. The final report included details of many areas of performance which were rated higher.

The Chief Constable explained the DIAL risk assessment form used by officers dealing with incidents involving or alleging Domestic Abuse, reporting that previously the use of the form had been optional but was now mandatory following the HMIC inspection. External, nationally recognised trainers had been employed to assist with the use of the form. She acknowledged an increase in workload for officers but highlighted that the use of technology would minimise that additional workload and prevent any delays in forwarding cases to the appropriate agency, a concern voiced by Panel members.

The Chief Constable commented on a series of other measures being taken under the Action Plan to improve performance and reported that a Peer Group inspection by a Force rated as 'good' had been commissioned.

Making final comment on the report the Commissioner felt that the overall rating given to the Force was an unfair reflection of the scope and quality of work carried out on the front line.

RESOLVED – That the HMIC report and the Commissioners arrangements for oversight and monitoring of the Force Action Plan be noted.

46. Election of Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire- 5 May 2016

The Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner gave a brief report on action being taken by his Office in preparation for the elections for a Police and Crime Commissioner on 5 May 2016.

Advice issued by various professional bodies such as the Association of Police and Crime Chief Executives on the management of information, publicity and working protocols was being followed. The overriding aim was to ensure that all prospective and declared candidates for the election were treated in a fair manner with the same information available to all. To this end dedicated pages had been set up on the OPCC website linking to a wealth of information about the role of Commissioner, the Force and policing both in Staffordshire and the wider context. Briefing sessions would be offered by his office and the Chief Constable. The Panel Chairman indicated his willingness to participate in the briefings to explain the Panels role and perspective.

RESOLVED – That the Chief Executive's report be noted.

47. Questions to the PCC by Panel members

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

Issue	Response
Recent press articles suggest that the Police Service does not give priority to reports of burglary	Performance statistics will be published in the near future which will demonstrate the importance being given to this area
Assurance sought that neighbourhood policing in Stoke-on-Trent will not be scaled back	The importance of visible policing is acknowledged. The increased use of mobile technology will assist. The numbers of PCSOs and front line officers is to remain stable. The value and standard of work of the PCSOs should not be underestimated.
What are the future plans for the Neighbourhood Watch scheme?	Additional investment to promote a 'real time' service using smart technology- the desired effect would be to increase interest in Neighbourhood Watch amongst younger people.
Are there any proposals to set up a Cadet Scheme in South Staffordshire?	It is intended to have a scheme in each district.

48. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

The Secretary submitted the proposed meeting dates and work programme for the Panel during 2016 highlighting the rearranged meeting in March 2016 to avoid the Purdah period before the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2016.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

49. Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated.

50. Exempt Minutes of the Confirmation Hearing held on 4 November 2015 (exemption paragraph 1)

RESOLVED – That the exempt minutes of the Confirmation Hearing held on 4 November 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Chairman