

## **Commissioner's response to Staffordshire Police Public Performance Report**

### **(incorporating Specified Information Order Statement on National Crime and Policing Measures)**

Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams' fourth police Public Performance Meeting took place on 26 January 2023. This is the second public meeting since the publication of the latest HMICFRS PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) report requiring Staffordshire Police to make improvements to services for the public of Staffordshire. It also provides the opportunity to share the progress made since the last meeting against the Commissioner's and the Chief Constable's vision for policing for the next 3 years. The Commissioner is keen that the key measures, revisited each meeting, will demonstrate the progress being made against delivering the service-level ambitions in his Police & Crime Plan, in the Staffordshire Policing Plan as well as the National Crime and Policing Measures (NCPM) in the government's Beating Crime Plan. Where appropriate, these are highlighted as local priorities or those that form national measures and the national Digital Crime Performance Pack (DCPP). This formal response to the performance report is designed to satisfy the statutory requirement to comment on Staffordshire's contribution to the national measures and be transparent about current progress against local priorities. The Commissioner is satisfied that, where appropriate, Staffordshire Police have used local data to demonstrate their current position.

Commissioner Ben Adams reminded the public and attendees what the purpose of these meetings is: to ensure that everything we do as a Commissioner's office and police force is transparent, and for the public to see the amount of detail we work through in performance meetings. Members of the Police, Fire & Crime Panel are also in attendance as part of their opportunity to hold the Commissioner to account on behalf of the public, as the Commissioner in turn fulfils his duty of delivering an efficient and effective police service.

Chief Constable Chris Noble introduced additional members of his team supporting the Public Performance Meeting, Detective Inspector Pete Cooke, responsible for Vehicle Crime, and Deputy Chief Constable Emma Barnett. Christmas and New Year have been very busy during a welcome but challenging period of inspection with HMICFRS. Progress is being made with the actions in place to address the PEEL inspection causes for concern, and there are some encouraging signs as the public should expect. One of the building blocks is our local policing model which has positive feedback across the workforce. It is not yet fully staffed and it won't be until April or May that numbers will reach the level required, although it will also still be a new workforce needing training to be at full competence and capacity over the next 2 or 3 years. All this gives us a degree of confidence in building for the future. Quality of Investigations is a priority with 1,349 investigations reviewed for learning, and this must have contributed to the fact that Staffordshire are arresting 82 more people per month than previously. Furthermore, two new Assistant Chief Constables have also been recruited with capability and experience in Fraud and Cyber Crime and Local Policing.

### **3. A Local and Responsive Service**

#### **3.1. Contact and Response: Emergency and Non-Emergency**

There has been a continued increase in demand over the last year and 999 performance is improving. Triage continues to assist 101 demand, and 999 performance against the target of 90% answered within 2 minutes is now at 88% in December. BT 999 call data is published on police.uk each month and Staffordshire has started to climb the league tables amongst other forces. Chris Noble also confirmed the importance of the quality of that interaction rather than just monitoring the timeliness. Live Chat is being reviewed as a useful, consistent, interactive tool to replace the multitude of digital contact methods currently in place and there will be more details in the next month. Following an in-depth analysis of 120 local incidents, 53 required police attendance which means that 67 should have had a different response, due to concern for safety or mental health for example. The project "Right Care, Right Person" policy will probably be rolled out nationally ensuring that ambulance, NHS, mental health or Local Authorities are tasked appropriately to support our communities. The force cannot continue to attend non-core work with partners and identify solutions, but should concentrate on policing and crime so they can deliver their core responsibilities. The Commissioner will work with the force in partnership to develop the right approach. The Chief is trying to be smarter about resourcing incidents and will be introducing operational sergeants within the frontline contact centre. Duty Inspectors will be local rather than based at HQ and the Commissioner confirmed that progress of these plans will continue to be monitored at regular performance meetings, the Public Performance Meeting and weekly meetings between the Chief and the Commissioner.

### 3.2. Response: Grade 1 and Grade 2

The new local policing model moving from 3 response hubs to 10 hubs went live at the end of June 2022 and has seen local policing teams aligned with PCSOs, Specials and detectives (CID). Chris Noble noted that 20% more staff needed to be recruited to operate the new model at optimum levels; however this will see approximately 50% of the workforce having less than 2 years' service which creates challenges around experience. The force is not yet meeting the response targets it sets itself. Approximately 50% of emergency (Grade 1) incidents are responded to within 15 minutes with an average attendance time of 26.1 minutes, a slight improvement on the 27.8 minutes reported at the last public meeting.

As part of the new operating model change, Grade 3 calls for service have been discontinued and any other incident requiring attendance is now classified as a Grade 2, which could be a response, a scheduled appointment or telephone or video appointment. Work continues to remove appointment-based response from the grade 2 figures to generate an accurate average attendance time for this category to manage expectations and maintain communication with the public. Understanding Grade 2 attendance is a priority for the Commissioner and will feature in all performance meetings until demonstrable progress can be shown.

The force has made great strides in understanding current service provision, where it wants to improve and accurate self-awareness. The THRIVE assessment tool is now well embedded in the contact centre to ensure the correct response is provided, deploying the right people with the right skills at the right time. The Chief confirmed that there would be renewed focus on utilising performance reviews and intelligent conversations in first line management, identifying where support is required and standards are being met. Particularly high-performing areas have been invited in to Staffordshire to undertake peer reviews and some of the actions introduced by Staffordshire in response to the HMICFRS areas for improvement are being shared with the College of Policing to demonstrate good practice and share the learning wider nationally.

### 3.3. Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) continues to reduce, with a 30% reduction in incidents compared to the pre-Covid national baseline. This reported reduction isn't necessarily the experience of the public so Commissioner Adams requested an explanation. Some is driven by ASB's reclassification as crime with the force now proactively looking for crimes within the ASB category, driven by inspection recommendations. Nevertheless, this is a priority for those who live, work and visit Staffordshire and will remain a priority for the force, the Commissioner and Local Authorities. The force will continue to monitor these reductions to understand the causal factors and is working on town centre locations and targeting repeat offenders. Local policing teams, working alongside Community Safety Partnerships, probation and housing associations, will be key in maintaining these reductions and making Staffordshire a safer place. The Commissioner is committed to empowering local partners to work together to focus on ASB and improving the consistent use of Community Triggers in hotspot areas. Where victims experience repeat ASB, this can be raised with Community Safety Partnerships and any appeals with actions taken will go direct to the Commissioner's office.

### 3.4. Reduce Neighbourhood Crime (NPCM)

Neighbourhood crime includes burglary residential, personal robbery, theft from and theft of vehicles, vehicle interference and theft from a person. Neighbourhood crime decreased by 6.5% compared to a pre-Covid baseline set by the government. This has increased slightly from the snapshot at the last Public Performance Meeting but is still below the national average reductions. The new model, with PCSOs and officers working together with local knowledge, is assisting in keeping those crime rates down. An additional opportunity is the 180 officers planned for recruitment in the next financial year. 120 will replace planned leavers and 60 will be additional staff to support growth in public protection, serious and organised crime and police officers in neighbourhood policing teams to support PCSOs who have supported local policing in the recent past. Staffordshire currently has high PCSO numbers per head of population and low number of officers per head of population and there is a budget-setting conversation ongoing to ensure the right people are in the right place to support local policing teams.

The notable anomaly this quarter is vehicle crime increases, particularly in the south of the county. The force is collaborating with neighbouring forces to ensure a joined-up approach and improved sharing of information through Op Bormus. Op Bormus is the force's response to car key burglary and keyless vehicle theft which has increased in line with national and regional increases. There are fewer cars coming into the country in general and there is now a market for stolen cars, exploiting technology or burglary to carry out these crimes.

Staffordshire's hotspots border on the West Midlands Police area, where many vehicles are subsequently recovered. Staffordshire is disproportionately affected by criminals coming out of the West Midlands and have very few locally based offenders. Vehicle crime is a Force Priority qualifying for additional funding for disruption and prevention patrols and able to utilise the Road Policing Unit (RPU) and Central Motorway Policing Group alongside local policing teams. A dedicated investigative team for Bormus, based in CID South and working with regional partners, targets offenders causing the most harm. In December 2022, Staffordshire suffered 29 car key burglaries and 130 keyless thefts. In January 2023 so far, there have been 19 car key burglaries and 61 keyless thefts. These reductions are testament to the increased proactivity and awareness, with 39 arrests in the last 2 months.

The Deputy Commissioner was keen to understand whether the force can maintain this level of resource and Chief Constable Chris Noble responded that they had no choice. Although there is a specialist proactive team, this is a wider message for communities and local policing teams, building confidence, gaining the support of the night-time economy to share information and being proactive and using the regional capability to best effect. Technology is being used to assist in the greater use of ANPR and car companies responding to crime trends. The force is keen to learn from this proactive action plan in order to develop further proactive teams in the future rather than being simply reactive to crime. Vehicle crime trends will be monitored at future performance meetings for sustained improvements.

### 3.5. Road Safety: Enforcement and Community Speed Watch

ANPR also assists in identifying drivers with no insurance and a variety of other traffic violations. The latest figures for Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) has decreased by 12% compared to the 2019-2020 baseline. The Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership continues to work on the 'fatal five' risk factors and vulnerable road users. There are no particular patterns around age or causation, types of vehicles, locations or age. In the last 12 months, there were 38 fatal collisions; 15 deaths in the age bracket 18-34 and 13 over 65, of which 6 involved medical episodes so perhaps there is some work that could be done about ensuring fitness to drive in our aging population. The Chief Constable mentioned future developments within the RPU to cover 24/7 which will assist in coverage across the force area and a focus on roads policing rather than being required to supplement day-to-day policing.

There is no set pattern to Staffordshire KSIs and they must be tackled in partnership to design and build our roads, set speed limits, set traffic calming measures, target vulnerable locations, hospitals, care homes and schools alongside police safety camera teams and the Community Speed Watch programme. Chris Noble will continue to invest in this area, stating that all KSIs are preventable by taking due care and attention, slowing down and assuming that others may make a mistake. The police safety camera team has two new vans and new digital cameras going into dangerous locations and exploring digital applications to support assessing locations more quickly and night-time cameras. This remains a priority because of the impact that deaths on the roads have on people's lives.

## 4. Prevent Harm and Protect People

### 4.1. Reduce Murder and other Homicide (NPCM)

Staffordshire is not an outlier in national Homicide data from the national Digital Crime and Performance Pack, sitting 31st out of 42 forces for volume of homicides per million using the Homicide Index\*. Staffordshire has experienced a broad range of murders that range from domestic murder and child murder to drug/criminal dispute-related murder. Alcohol, drug misuse and mental health are common factors in murder investigations. Many of these murders are the result of broader social issues and require a long-term holistic approach to breaking the generational cycle of violence. Staffordshire Police, together with the Commissioner's Office, Local Authorities, health trusts, education, Probation and the voluntary sector, have established a Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Violence Reduction Alliance to tackle the root causes of violence. Education and prevention continues to be a key part of the Staffordshire Strategy.

\*Homicide Index data includes contextual data and takes court outcome into account

#### 4.2. Reduce Serious Violence (NPCM): inc Domestic Abuse & Violence against Women & Girls

Nationally this is measured through hospital admissions of under-25s for assault with a sharp object, and police recorded information of offences involving discharge of a firearm. A local measure for knife crime and gun crime is used at the Public Performance Meeting to show Staffordshire's position and this is used as a benchmark for future progress. Staffordshire's knife crime has decreased by -2.1% and gun crime by 32.0% compared to the National Beating Crime Plan baseline.

Serious Violence (Robbery and Violence with Injury) has seen a 9.7% increase compared to the National Beating Crime Plan baseline. The graph shown on page 25 shows recorded crime with an increase in April 2022 rather than reported crime and if possible would be more useful as reported crime rather than the validated data next time. The force is working in partnership to make public spaces safer. Five parks in Stoke-on-Trent have received investment to improve CCTV, street lighting and environmental design. The Violence Reduction Alliance is working with a group of young people in a number of areas, including victims and offenders of serious violence to improve their behaviour, reduce risk, divert them away from violence and prevent exploitation.

Both the Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) measure show an increasing trend. The Beating Crime Plan measure shows an increase of 54.9% against the baseline 2018/2019. The Chief Constable offered to break down the particular crimes included within 'Other Violence against the Person' in order to discuss the different types of crimes recorded within this group, particularly the digital aspects of violence against the person.

Domestic Abuse crimes account for 43% of VAWG crimes. Victim referrals to support services have also increased over the last 12 months and the Commissioner has committed to continue to fund the support service contract for these victims, although the contract will require an additional £1m funding due to the additional demand. Chief Constable Chris Noble is confident that recording of Domestic Abuse is improving and progress has been made in recognising children as victims in their own right. A core part of the force's new approach to public protection is not only supporting the victim through the process but providing training, skills and procedures to officers to ensure that domestic offending does not go on unchecked when a victim can't or doesn't want to proceed with a prosecution. For instance, body worn video providing evidence for a police prosecution without formal statements from the victim.

Serious violence\* includes Knife and Gun Crime, Personal and Business Robbery, Violence with Injury

#### 4.3. Disrupt Drugs Supply and County Lines (NPCM)

Staffordshire is currently 16<sup>th</sup> out of 42 forces, with an 8% increase in drugs offences compared to the 2018-2019 baseline. The Commissioner set the scene for the core work around restricting supply or dealing on the streets and treatment for addiction, and that funding is available to work with the Combatting Drugs Partnership. Drugs is not a victimless crime, creating significant harm to individuals and having knock-on effects on the NHS and other partners. The force has made real progress on County Lines with only 8 currently operating in Staffordshire, compared to March 2021 when there were 43 known county lines operating locally. The force continues to focus on high-harm lines along with the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU).

#### 4.4. Tackle Cyber Crime (NCPM)

There has been an increase of 13% in Action Fraud cases reported by Staffordshire residents compared to the national baseline in 2018/2019. There has been a 5% increase in those referred back to Staffordshire to conduct local investigations against the same baseline. Chris Noble acknowledged that it is an under-reported area by individuals and businesses and certainly a growth area for the force.

Criminal justice positive outcomes are up to 9% although the vast majority (54%) result in a disposal of 'unable to progress the investigation'. The new ACC will be reviewing Staffordshire's capability and how the force docks into regional and national capability. Staffordshire contributes 83 staff members directly to the ROCU, with a large chunk of time spent on investigating Fraud and Cyber Crime. The newly recruited Assistant Chief Constable is a specialist in this area and the Commissioner would like to bring Fraud and Cyber Crime back for an in-depth discussion at the next public meeting.

## **5. Support Victims and Witnesses**

- 5.1. Victims' Code of Practice Compliance: 75% of victims are referred to support providers within the 2-day target.
- 5.2. Improve Satisfaction among Victims and Witnesses, with focus on Victims of DA (NCPM)

The force looks at the difference between people's perception of the police before and after contact with the force. 24% had a more positive view of the police after contact but an increasing number of people have a more negative view. The force is working up a holistic Victim & Witness Strategy which will encompass all contact with victims and provide the basis for masterclasses for all officers to increase focus on the victim journey.

### **5.3. Public Confidence**

The complaints dataset has progressed since the last meeting and there is now an appetite to understand the rolling 12-month trends in complaint themes and the organisational learning that has been identified and can be shared. The Commissioner is very keen that the public have confidence in how complaints are handled. The Commissioner has also discussed with the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) the benefit of the force moving to a customer service approach to dealing with complaints, and both Commissioner and IOPC are comfortable with the Staffordshire process.

There has been a significant increase in misconduct matters which may be attributed to the 'Know the Line' campaign the force is running and it is reassuring that these matters are being reported and dealt with appropriately. Individual staff members may have more than one conduct matter attributed to their case. The main corruption threat is sexual misconduct. In 2022, there were 40 cases which was a third increase on 2021 and 2021 was a 70% increase on the previous year. In 2022, 17 were from members of the public and 23 were internal misconduct cases. Oversight of these investigations sits with the Deputy Chief Constable. The force is working through the recommendations from the national misconduct report recommendations following the recent Met case and were inspected in December 2022. In the main, the Staffordshire inspection was positive and recognised the quality of investigations within the counter corruption team. The force is updating policies and the focus remains on conduct and standards across the board for every member of staff utilising personal development reviews, first line supervision and good leadership. Deputy Chief Constable Emma Barnett and the Commissioner requested any member of the public who may have a concern about the conduct of an officer not to hesitate to report it to the force.

## **7. A More Effective Criminal Justice System**

### **7.1. Criminal Justice – Timeliness**

The Commissioner acknowledged the terrible delays that victims and witnesses are experiencing due to court backlogs and barrister strikes. The key headline from the national Digital Data Dashboard is that Staffordshire is an outlier in timeliness from recorded offence to police charge for a victim-based crime. The average time to police charge in Staffordshire has decreased slightly to 74 days, which is still above the national average (45 days). The force is intent on developing clear investigation plans and increasing staff in the Public Protection Unit in order to boost capacity, with the aim of speeding up investigations. This measure will be reviewed on a regular basis in order to track progress in bringing this time to investigate closer to the national average. The additional context around most similar forces and national datasets aids understanding and provides additional reassurance of Staffordshire's current performance and this will be brought back for more detail at the next public meeting.

## **8. Enabling Services: HR & Finance Update**

### **8.1. Operation Uplift, Officer Recruitment**

The Commissioner is reassured that the force is on track to meet and exceed the officer Uplift numbers by March 2023. The Commissioner is also aware of the low numbers of frontline officers compared to other similar areas and the discussion about a further 60 officers in the coming financial year will continue with the force and the Police, Fire & Crime Panel, and future budget setting to live within our means.

The Commissioner thanked the Chief Officer team for a very useful meeting, noting the uplift in Domestic Abuse and violent crime whilst remaining a low crime area, and that is down to the hard work and dedication of Staffordshire officers and staff. Reducing ASB is positive, improved answering of calls is positive and the positive investment in officers and technology for the RPU. The local visible response model appears to be settling in very well and the feedback received from interested parties and the public is also positive. He also referenced the absolute importance of dealing with misconduct matters in a quick and thorough way and continuing to maintain Staffordshire's high standards. The Commissioner ended by commending Deputy Chief Constable Emma Barnett on receiving the King's medal for her service to policing.

The next Public Performance Meeting is May 17 2023, 1pm at the Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford.