



Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

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Glossary

AA*	Appropriate Adults	Force	Staffordshire Police
AGS	Annual Governance Statement	HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services
APACE	Association of Police Authority Chief Executives	ICV*	Independent Custody Visitors
CC	Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police	PAB	Performance & Assurance Board
CFO	Chief Fire Officer of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue	PACCTS	Police & Crime Commissioners Treasurers Society
DSC	Deputy Staffordshire Commissioner	PFCP	Police, Fire and Crime Panel
DWV*	Dog Welfare Visitor	SC	Staffordshire Commissioner
ETAP*	Ethics Transparency & Audit Panel	SCO	Staffordshire Commissioners Office
ETAP ERP*	Ethics Review Panel for ETAP	SGB	Strategic Governance Board
ETAP FP*	Finance Panel for ETAP	SNP*	Safer Neighbourhood Panel
FARS	Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Services		

* These functions are made up of members of the public

1. Introduction



Ben Adams
Staffordshire Commissioner
Police, Fire & Rescue, Crime

As the Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire I have the duty to ensure that we have robust Corporate Governance arrangements in place.

To comply with this duty my office is delegated the responsibility for the preparation and delivery of two Corporate Governance Frameworks, one relating to Staffordshire Police and the other relating to Staffordshire Fire & Rescue.

This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) prepared by my office provides the public of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent an overview of how I have ensured compliance with the published Corporate Governance Frameworks for the year ending 31st March 2022.

I am pleased that again despite a global Coronavirus pandemic, a strong commitment in obtaining the best value for money for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent residents has been demonstrated across the two services and by my office. The Covid-19 pandemic showed robust office business continuity processes were in place and implemented successfully.

Although some functions in the office and in commissioned services were initially scaled back to comply with Government Covid-19 regulations, it is extremely pleasing that business as usual was restored very quickly through the assistance of partners, utilising new technology and implementing different ways of working.

My team attends policing Bronze, Silver and Gold Command Meetings and is also in attendance at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Tactical Cell Meetings. We have assisted in the sharing of information across the services, played a key role in ensuring vital commissioned services continue to operate e.g. victim support, domestic abuse, and worked in a wider partnership, reducing duplication of effort in what has been a challenging time professionally and personally for many.

In January 2022 my Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan were published, accessible via this link:

[Reports - Staffordshire Commissioner \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/reports)

2. Scope of Responsibility

The Staffordshire Commissioner (SC) has the statutory responsibility to set the strategic direction and objectives of both Staffordshire Police (Force) and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue (FARS). In addition the SC will hold to account the Chief Constable (CC) and Chief Fire Officer (CFO) for the performance or their service against the set objectives.

The SC has wider responsibilities for ensuring that the Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO) business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. A cross cutting objective through all of these responsibilities for the SC is that public money is safeguarded and used efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the SC is responsible for putting into place within the SCO proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the exercise of its functions, which includes ensuring that a sound system of internal control is maintained throughout the year and that arrangements are in place for the management of risk. In exercising this responsibility, the SC places reliance on both the CC and CFO to support the governance and risk management processes.

The SC has approved governance frameworks with the CC and CFO that are consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy guidance 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and Police', a copy of which can be found on the CIPFA website.

This AGS explains how the SC has complied with the CIPFA code of practice for good governance and the legal requirements of Regulations 3, 4 and 5 of The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) in relation to internal control and internal audit.

Disclosure Note:

In line with CIPFA code of practice, and for completeness and transparency, the SCO wishes to outline a key event post year end 2021/22 which may reasonably be considered relevant for the 2021/22 statements.

During March 2022 the force was notified of two accelerated causes of concern as a result of early findings from the HMICFRS PEEL continuous assessment process, which included the auditing of a cross section of case files. The concerns were largely predicated on the risks identified in respect of recognising and assessing vulnerability at the initial contact stage and the effectiveness of investigations and support for victims. The force immediately responded to this by setting out and delivering against a series of rapid improvement plans, putting an enhanced governance structure in place, and increasing the capability and capacity of its in-house audit and scrutiny function. In June 2022 Staffordshire Police was escalated into the 'engaged' level of monitoring by HMICFRS which saw enhanced scrutiny and monitoring arrangements of the force by the inspectorate. The force's full PEEL report was published in September 2022 which also saw a number of additional Areas for Improvement set out as part of the overall PEEL assessment.

Significant improvement activity has been delivered throughout the latter part of 2021/22 and into 2022/23 and the impact of this monitored closely both internally by the Force and SCO and externally. The inspectorate has since (December 2022) revisited the force to undertake further auditing and assessment which recognised improvements have been made although there is still more to do. These findings are in line with the force's own assessment of progress to date whilst also recognising that significant medium and longer terms plans are also place to ensure sustained improvement and delivery.

A comprehensive account of the above governance arrangements and their effectiveness will be documented in the 2022/23 annual governance statement for transparency and continuity.

3. Implementation

To provide assurance to the SC that appropriate management and reporting arrangements have been made and that these are adequate and effective, the key elements in place include the following:

- The Corporate Governance Frameworks;
- A Risk Management Strategy;
- An Annual Governance Statement produced by the SCO, the Force and FARS;
- The Police and Crime Plan (Force) and the Fire and Rescue Plan (FARS) that seeks to focus activity on the issues of highest importance to the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent;
- Ensuring that there is an effective Internal & External Audit function.

A key feature of the Governance Frameworks is the system of internal control, based on a framework of robust financial and contract procedure rules and processes, administrative procedures, management supervision and a system of delegation and accountability. Responsibility for delivery against the framework and development of the system is undertaken by managers within the SCO, the Force and FARS and specific elements are reviewed by internal or external auditors as detailed:

2021/22	Internal Audit Provider	External Audit Provider
SCO	RSM (UK Group LLP)	EY (Ernst & Young LLP)
Force	RSM (UK Group LLP)	EY (Ernst & Young LLP)
FARS	RSM (UK Group LLP)	Grant Thornton (UK Group LLP)

The Governance Frameworks are supported by:

- Performance management frameworks, which are focussed on monitoring and achieving the objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan and the Fire & Rescue Plan;
- Comprehensive budgeting systems that seek to align resources with priorities;
- Financial reporting, which routinely projects end of year outturn positions to allow early corrective action;
- A Commissioning Framework which details the approach to engagement with partners and to commissioning appropriate outcomes through third party providers;
- Engagement in value for money benchmarking such as is conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS);
- Coherent Corporate Governance Frameworks which set out the rules and procedures for effective working within and between the SCO, the Force and FARS;
- An independent Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel (ETAP) that is charged with seeking assurance over risk, governance and internal control for SCO, the Force and FARS;
- Independent Custody Visitors Scheme (ICVs) and the Safer Neighbourhood Panel's (SNPs);
- Risk Management Strategy, registers and action plans;
- Appropriate statutory officers within the SCO, the Force and FARS, who are key personnel in the respective leadership teams with relevant expertise on strategic and tactical matters;
- Codes of Conduct and standards of behaviour clearly set out in governance documents and signed off by the SC.

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Contained within the Governance Frameworks is the Code of Corporate Governance which sets out 7 principles of good governance which are taken from the international framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014), with the aim of encouraging better service delivery, improved accountability ensuring that organisations achieve their intended outcomes whilst operating in the public interest at all times.

The 7 principles are as follows:

- 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.

This AGS will address each one of the seven principles, demonstrating areas of consistent compliance and additional work undertaken in the last year by the SCO.

Please Note: Within this document you will find boxes like this where actions identified by reference number in the 2020/21 AGS have been addressed. All previous years have been actioned.

In summary these actions were:

1. The SCO is to undertake a review in 2021/22 of the governance arrangements, specifically the internal control and escalation structure as seen in Appendix B, to ensure fit for purpose and where possible create further efficiency across the organisations.
2. The SCO to implement Part 1 requirements in conjunction with both operational services and ensure appropriate feedback to the Home Office consultation on Part 2 of the PCC review.
3. The SCO is to develop and deliver a full induction package including a plan for the first 100 days in office of the new PFCC, ensuring that the new incumbent and any deputies are assisted in maintaining continuity, whilst also having the ability to bring their own strategic intent to the fore.
A recruitment process for a new Chief Constable & Chief Fire Officer will take place during 2021/22. The office will work with the College of Policing the National Fire Chiefs Council and other local partners to ensure a robust process that attracts good applicants and ultimately excellent appointments.
4. The SCO to look to enhance provision of information surrounding sustainability agendas across the SCO, Force and FARS in the next AGS for FY 2021/22.

The full Action Plan for 2020/21 can be seen in Appendix A.

For completeness actions identified against this 2021/22 AGS
are contained in Appendix C.

A

Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

The SC and the SCO are committed to the Code of Corporate Governance and operate in a way to promote openness, integrity and compliance with relevant laws and regulations throughout the organisation. The SC has signed up to a published Code of Conduct which is underpinned by the Nolan Principles of public life.

The SCO Chief Executive is the designated Monitoring Officer as well as the 'Head of Paid Service' for the purposes of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The 'Head of Paid Service' aspect of the Chief Executive means taking responsibility for the coordination and discharge of the SC's functions and managing the SCO and the staff within it.

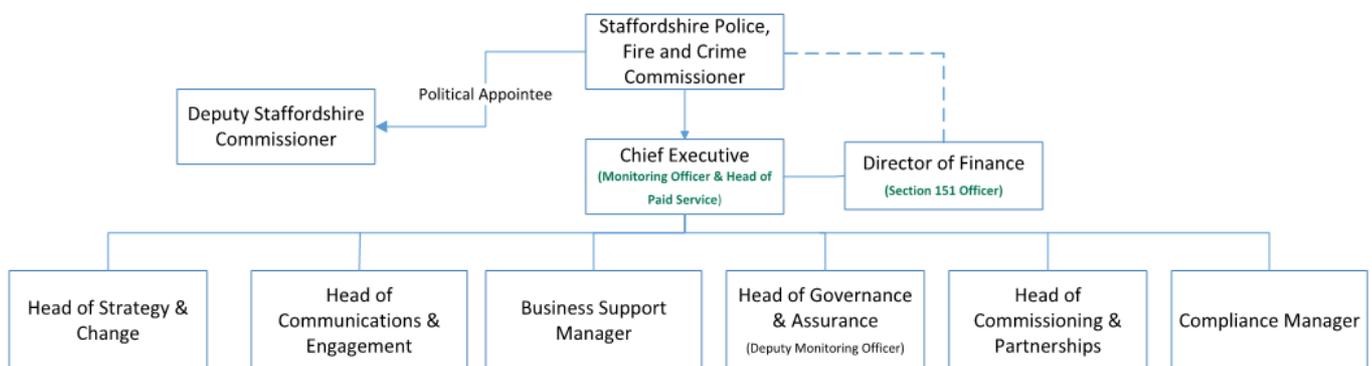
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The Monitoring Officer's remit is to draw to the SC's attention any actual or possible contravention of law, maladministration or injustice. Guidance from the Association of Police Authority Chief Executives (APACE) Group is utilised to provide clarity as the scope and extent of responsibilities and the detailed legal and statutory obligations that exist.¹

During 2021/22 the Head of Governance and Assurance in the SCO has been the Deputy Monitoring Officer and takes leadership on certain areas on behalf of the Monitoring Officer and acts as the Monitoring Officer in times of absence.

The SC is also required to have a Section 151 officer, (S151 of the Local Government Finance Act 1972) in this case, a Director of Finance, who has responsibility for finance and to ensure the dispersal of funds is appropriate and lawful. This post is supported by policies and procedures in place, including Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders; these have been reviewed and refreshed as part of the 2021/22 review of the Corporate Governance Frameworks.

Key posts within the SCO include:



In total the SCO has a team of 30 staff equating to 28.22 full time equivalents, some of these roles although employed and managed by the SCO are temporary positions funded through projects with partners and central government.

Staff employed by the SCO are covered by the terms and conditions of the Police Staff Council. The SCO utilises the Force's People Services Function to act on their behalf on Human Resource and Organisational Development matters as well as ensuring compliance with policies for computer usage, system access, IT services including data protection, information assurance and health and safety, in addition the SCO also utilise IT and Financial Services provided by the Force.

Staff work within a structure with job descriptions & person specifications that ensure legal and statutory obligations are met and support the SC's strategy and priorities. All post holders have been recruited in line with the organisations policies and procedures, including police vetting and have the skills, experience and qualifications required to undertake their role. All staff have access to learning and development opportunities and attend seminars and other events to ensure that they are up to date and aware of changes to guidance, legislation and practice across all services.

SCO staff also comply with the Force standards for management of police information and have access to the Force 'Bad Apple' reporting portal for Whistle Blowing. Where there is a conflict of

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/42/section/5>

interest or a business interest this must be declared to the Chief Executive and recorded through the defined HR procedures.

The Ethics & Review Panel (ERP), held its inaugural meeting January 2021, this is a sub group of the ETAP. The main purpose of the panel is to enhance assurance on ethical issues within the Force, FARS and SCO by gaining insight that high standards of probity, fairness and integrity, are embedded in every day conduct and working practices across the Police and Fire Services. ERP have met quarterly through 2021 and consists of seven members from the full ETAP panel.

The Force have a Code of Conduct based on the 7 Standards of Public Life – known as the ‘Nolan Principles’: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership. The College of Policing Code of Ethics, has the addition of two further principles: Fairness and Respect. During 2021, the Fire Service have adopted a revised Core Code of Ethics, this consists of five ethical principles: Community at our heart, Integrity, Respect, Leadership and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

One of the first tasks of ERP has been to understand how well these principles and standards are promoted and maintained in each of the services. During the year, they have received presentations from the Force’s Head of Performance Standards and the Chief Fire Officer with members being able to ask a range of questions to test the service’s commitment to ethical values, implementation of the ethical codes and process that support them.

The SCO has a published Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy available on the policy page of our website: <https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/transparency/policies-and-procedures/>. This applies to the SC, the Deputy Staffordshire Commissioner (DSC) and all staff that work within the SCO. The policy is designed to prevent, promote detection and identify a clear route for investigation. The approach set out in the policy also demands that organisations that the SCO work with act in the same manner.

In line with Force and FARS policy, through the one to one supervision sessions with senior officers of the SCO and senior Force or FARS officers, the Chief Executive and Director of Finance are made aware of any specific or potential risks of fraud or corruption.

The SCO and the Force receives and disseminates notices of potential and/or emerging fraud through a number of sources, including internal audit, other Police Forces and national bodies such as the Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurers’ Society (PACCTS). Police and Fire both participate in the national Fraud Initiative programme and the outcome is reported and actioned where necessary by the SC’s Director of Finance and the CC’s Chief Finance Officer. Police and Fire Staff can report any matters of fraud either directly to the Director of Finance or through the Whistleblowing Policies that are in place.

The SC and the Chief Executive are supported by both the Director of Joint Legal Services for West Midlands and Staffordshire Police and Legal Services for Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service on legal matters providing internal or external legal support as required. There are numerous examples of the legal services functions providing the support required, for example on major procurements, collaborations, or other complex matters.

The Equality Act 2010 has three aims to which the SCO must give due regard, meaning we consciously think about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision making:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act:

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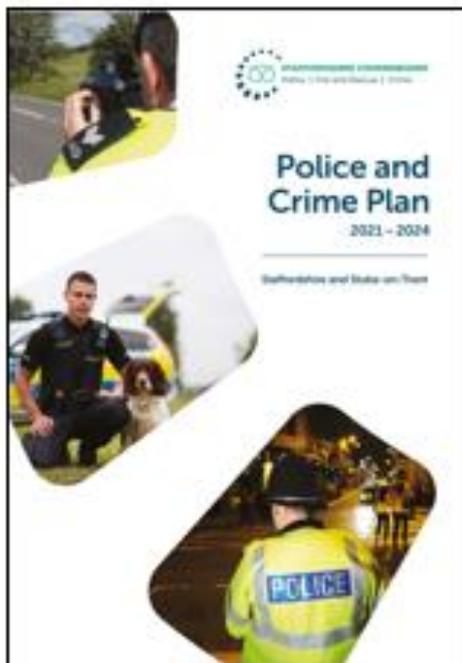
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic; and people who do not share it and;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

All decision forms reference the requirement or otherwise of an Equality Impact Assessment and where necessary these are then published with the decision form, follow this link for all published decision forms: <https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/transparency/decisions/>

B

Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

As the elected representative of the public the SC has made a commitment for policing and crime clear in the election manifesto and embedded this with development and publication of a Police and Crime Plan 2021-24. In addition, the SC through responsibility for the governance of Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service has developed and published a Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-24.



There is a statutory responsibility for the SC to obtain community and stakeholder views on policing and Fire & Rescue services in the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent area and the SC and the SCO are committed to openness, transparency and acting in the public interest.

Our commitment to openness, transparency and accountability can be demonstrated by: -

- The SC and DSC have signed up to a published Code of Conduct which is underpinned by the Nolan Principles of public life;
- The SCO staff complying with the "Nolan Principles" and other policies and responsibilities e.g. information sharing protocols;

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- The SC's Police and Crime Plan 2021-24, Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-24 and other published documents, including the Annual Report, the budget report, the statement of accounts;
- Information provided through the SC website, social media and other routes that provide local people with relevant information on performance and outcomes and the SCs intentions;
- The live webcasts of the Public Performance Meetings and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel Meetings;
- Appropriate use of the press and media by the SC & DSC;
- Decision forms relating to significant public interest, made available online for public scrutiny;
- Publication of information on remuneration and expenses;
- The establishment of a number of forums independent of the SC, comprised of members of the public, in particular ETAP, SNPs, ICVs, AA's and DWV. These panels scrutinise a number of areas within the SCO, the Force and FARS;
- ETAP hold regular public meetings, meeting papers and minutes are published on the SCO website;
- ETAP Reviews, SNP Scrutiny Reports and ICV Visit Statistics are all published on the SCO website.

Our commitment to stakeholder involvement is demonstrated by: -

- Consultation and engagement activity through the SC and the SCO;
- Reports to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and attendance at other democratically led forums;
- The establishment of a number of forums independent of the SC, comprised of members of the public, in particular the ETAP and the SNPs. These panels scrutinise a number of areas and publish their findings on the SCO website;
- Working closely with a wide range of partners; local authorities, Criminal Justice agencies, NHS bodies, private and voluntary sector organisations etc.;
- Utilising a number of channels of communications for the public and other stakeholders. The SC and the SCO engages with various groups, organisations and people throughout the year, updating them on the work of the office, hearing their questions and views and providing answers that meet their needs.

In addition the SCO both leads and attends multi-agency forums with its partners and stakeholders. In these instances, the SCO either develops or adheres to agreed terms of reference in terms of expectations. Examples of SCO led governance structures are the newly formed Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Strategic Community Safety Forum, the Local Criminal Justice Partnership Board, Commissioning and Development Board's for Victims, Domestic Abuse and Offender Management and the Violence Reduction Alliance Executive Board. Police and Crime Commissioner's also work jointly at a regional level, leading a Regional Governance Group (with Chief Constable's attending) and a Regional Criminal Justice Forum. Examples of attended local governance groups are the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Strategic Group and the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership meetings in Stoke and Staffordshire. These structures assist partnership working and provide opportunities for streamlined planning, commissioning and delivery whilst offering the opportunity for stakeholders to hold each other to account and challenge, plus address any deficits in actions and performance.

SC accountability is tested through a number of channels. These include the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, comprised of local elected members who meet on a quarterly basis and who hold the SC to account, scrutinise the SCO, Force and FARS performance and regularly review and scrutinise the financial health of the organisations, including the production of the Medium-Term Financial Strategies.

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel meetings are open to the public and are also broadcast live through the Staffordshire County Council website and are highlighted by the SCO Communications and Public Engagement team through the SC website, social media, as well as through local and national media. Questions from members of the public directly to the SC are welcomed at panel meetings.

[Police, Fire and Crime Panel - Staffordshire Commissioner \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk)



Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

The strategic priorities are set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2021-24 and the Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-24. These documents underpin the SC's overarching ambitions for delivering positive and sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The SC has an established office that works beyond governance and scrutiny to ensure that there is a longer term strategic direction around all aspects of policing, fire and community safety and that when put into practical terms enables or influences delivery against the priorities.

Each of the priorities are reflected within the SC's performance arrangements which inform how effectively the outcomes are being delivered. The SC can then hold to account Chief Officers for that performance. There are three levels of accountability which each include multiple functions for obtaining information on desired outcomes that are linked to the priorities, these being:

Public Accountability

Ensures that the SC demonstrates the primary role of holding the Chief Officers to account and ensuring value for money whilst meeting the priorities and needs of the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Examples of this function would be the regular Public Performance Meetings, ETAP Meetings and Thematic Reviews, SNP Scrutiny Reports and the performance information available on the SC's website.

SCO Level Accountability

Examination of key activity at a strategic level allowing the SC to take a detailed, searching approach with consideration of all relevant issues. Examples of this function would be the Strategic Governance Board, Performance and Assurance Board, Confidential Inquiry Sessions, various joint management meetings, and SC & Chief Officer's informal and formal review meetings.

Operational Level Accountability

Generates a detailed understanding of operational areas where there are matters of concern affecting the effective and efficient operation of the Force, FARS or partner agencies. Examples of this function would be operational working groups, ETAP dip sampling and multi-agency workgroups.

All parties are committed to continuous improvement in managing performance as demonstrated by the commitment to have agreed Performance & Accountability Framework's for both the Force and FARS.

The SC is committed to improving outcomes for the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent through partnership working with other agencies who are responsible for economic, social and environmental benefits. To ensure this happens the SC has strategic overview and regular operational updates on the delivery plans owned by each team within the SCO.

Through the Local Business Case for Joint Governance of the Police Service and Fire and Rescue Service in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, collaborative working has continued to mature and grow. The joint enabling services regularly review opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness, an example of this being the decision taken for Police to adopt the Integra Finance System used by Fire. This will save on licensing costs, and will also allow the Finance Team to work across Fire and Police transactions more easily, which will in time realise additional efficiencies.

Collaboration on the use of the joint estates continues to increase. With to the relocation of the Police into Hanley Fire Station last year, progress has been made on the disposal of Hanley Police Station. This work ending with the generation of a capital receipt including saving the revenue costs associated with the building. Plans have been developed for the relocation of the Uttoxeter Neighbourhood Partnership Team into the Uttoxeter Fire Station which will enable the future disposal of the Uttoxeter Police Station. Further opportunities for co-location are being developed and led through the Joint Strategic Estates Board Chaired by the SC.

Action 2: AGS 2020/21

Part 1 of the National PCC Review recommendations were announced by the Home Secretary in March 2021 and a commitment to legislating these when Parliamentary time allows was given. The Commissioner and the Office contributed to the review through a specific local response to the consultation document, contributing to the APCC response and attending relevant consultation forums with the Home Office e.g. on Fire and Rescue, given the Fire and Rescue Authority status locally. When legislation passes the SCO will look to make appropriate amendments.

Part 2 of the National PCC Review has seen the SCO contributing to a further wide reaching APCC response document, which was submitted to the Home Secretary on December 2nd 2021. This long-term vision focussed on 5 areas where it is believed that government could empower and give further support to PCC's, including;

- Criminal Justice and Probation,
- Partnership and collaboration,
- Accountability to the public,
- Data and evidence,
- Tidying up legislation.

The SC's commitment to protecting frontline resources requires that budgets are managed effectively and are sustainable in the medium to long term. Financial reports including the Medium-Term Financial Strategies are provided on a regular basis to both ETAP and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel. These link to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan 2021-24 and the Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-24 for which progress is also reported to the panel.

The formal decision making process for expenditure and changes to programmes, policies and procedures requires that an Equality Impact Assessment is completed as part of the process. This assesses the impact of any changes that may affect staff, stakeholders and the public.

Action 4: AGS 2020/21

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service produced an Environmental Strategy in 2021/22 and presented this through the organisation, bringing it also to the Joint Strategic Estates Board with Staffordshire Police.

A presentation on Environmental, Social and Governance 'ESG' was also given to the Finance Panel arm of ETAP. This was to highlight the CIPFA Proposal to adopt a new mandatory treasury management practice on evaluating the risks associated with ESG. There is also the potential for this to be included in the new Treasury Management Code.

Further research and development is to be done in this area across all 3 organisations and the SCO will maintain this action into 2022/23 for further updates.

D

Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Business plans aligned to strategic priorities are in use by each of the teams within the SCO to ensure that identified progress against priorities occurs. The teams produce a report for the Police, Fire and Crime Panel meetings detailing progress on delivery against the priorities. A statutory Annual Report is published and presented to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel about the work of the SC in the proceeding financial year. Budget proposals are presented to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy is available for review by the public and others. It is recognised that delivery of the SC priorities will require input from other agencies with responsibility for serving the community of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent; for this reason, the report references SC operational updates and where applicable wider work undertaken by the SCO, the Force, FARS and other agencies.

Priorities are highlighted through press releases, SC social media and other communications to the public. Key strategic documents are published in hard copy form and electronically and are available to the public in copy on request or via self-service from the SCO website, this is also the case for SC newsletters and public consultations. The website is continually updated with latest news and publications that provide further information on how the strategy is being delivered.

There are formal arrangements in place to monitor against outcomes associated with decision making, performance and financial management across the SCO, Police and Fire & Rescue services. Monitoring methods and frequencies are contained within the relevant Performance Management Frameworks and meetings are held separately for each service to enable detailed scrutiny and challenge where exceptions occur. Where the response to agreed actions does not deliver expected outcomes, escalation to the Strategic Governance Board allows for robust challenge and necessary interventions by the Commissioner. A Strategic Governance Board for Collaboration oversees progress in developing collaborative arrangements between the two services to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

Over the summer of 2021 a thorough review was conducted into the operation of the SCO Safer Neighbourhood Panels function across Staffordshire and how it links to the statutory function of the PFCC & Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO). This review included:

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- Analysis of membership demographic,
- A review of other PFCC / PCCs public accountability/scrutiny functions,
- A piece of analysis on the last 3 years' worth of SNP meeting discussion themes, scrutiny reports and resulting outcomes by SNP area,
- A research piece on coming legislation, national areas of interest & HMICFRS findings,
- A review of the PFCC Statutory obligations

The review concluded that the SCO close the Safer Neighbourhood Panels and look to implement dedicated scrutiny panels for specific themed areas of policing powers, to give consistency and focus and that as far as reasonably practicable these panels are representative of the community that they serve utilising a pool of SCO volunteers. A proposal for a new style scrutiny & assurance arrangement was agreed by the Strategic Governance Board for Policing and the Commissioner's Independent Scrutiny Panels 'CISP' were accepted as a key function in providing the PFCC with assurance in addition achieving parity with those areas identified by the Home Office and HMICFRS et al, as having best practice in external scrutiny. The CISP Project Plan identified a key date for go-live being April 2022. By this point all relevant recruitment, including the transfer of SNP volunteers to the new roles where they expressed interest and training would have been completed. A further update on the outcomes delivered by CISP will follow in the 2022/23 AGS.

In March 2022 the Independent Custody Visiting Association released the revised Quality Assurance Frameworks for schemes to be graded against. The SCO has a statutory function to manage this scheme and support the Independent Custody Visitors 'ICV's' in Staffordshire who check on the welfare of those detained by Staffordshire Police. Currently the Independent Custody Visitor scheme delivered by the SCO is awarded the Gold Standard. The highest standard available is Platinum and the assessment for the SCO is due in October 2023 with an aim that the Platinum Standard be achieved or the Gold Standard maintained.

E

Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Officers within the SCO have access to continuous professional development through the support mechanisms that are available at a national level (APACE/PACCTS). In addition, regular seminars are available that provide for more specific development needs. All staff have access to learning and development opportunities supported by a norm of one to one supervision and team meetings.

The SCO shares knowledge, learning and best practice through the Regional Policy Officers and the formal collaborative approach on services across the region such as those delivered through the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) and the Central Motorways Policing Group (CMPG). These areas of knowledge also support the SC in influencing the direction of key national programmes such as the Specialist Capabilities Programme.

The SC has promoted partnership working as a key facet of delivering the strategic objectives, the involvement of the SCO Commissioning Team in these arrangements ensure that the SCO has a voice. This involves the SCO working closely with a wide range of partners; local authorities, Criminal Justice System agencies, National Health Service bodies, private and voluntary sector organisations etc.

The SCO, Force and FARS operate through adhering to their Corporate Governance Frameworks. They are interrelated systems that brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes to deliver a set of goals. The frameworks have

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been aligned to the CIPFA Delivering Good Governance Guidance Notes for Policing 2016 and agreed by the SC. The Accountability and Internal Control Structures for delivery of governance arrangements by the SCO can be seen in Appendix B.

Within the SCO statutory officers carry out their functions and offer the appropriate advice and support on matters within their sphere of responsibility in line with legislation. In addition, these officers with support from other senior managers deliver comprehensive business planning through individual service plans, service risk registers and service budget reporting which all ensure improved monitoring and continuous improvement of finances, performance and risk readiness.

Our Local Criminal Justice Partnership Board has continued to evolve during 2020/21 despite the Covid-19 pandemic. A new performance framework has been established that allows for a much better understanding of cross-system performance issues and taking of improvement action where appropriate. There is more to do in this area of work and it is hoped that Part 2 of the National PCC Review will reflect further on the role of the PCC in particular.

An overarching Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Community Safety Forum has been established, and held its inaugural meeting in January 2022. The purpose of the SSSCSF is to bring together responsible authorities and other relevant organisations, to deliver collaboratively on community safety outcomes for local people and local communities. It provides a structure for key organisations to work together co-operatively and collectively to focus resources and investment on a shared strategic vision.

Action 3: AGS 2020/21

The SCO developed a 100 day plan to ensure the successful induction of the incoming SC. This was structured around a series of induction sessions for newly elected PCC's provided by the APCC.

The plan allowed the SC to spend time at the outset, with Chief Officers to understand key strategic issues facing the SCO, Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service. This was followed by visits to directorates in both services and sessions with staff and staff group representatives to gain insight into day-to-day challenges.

Meetings with regional partners, local authorities and criminal justice partners provided a perspective on broader community safety issues. The SC also visited many of the organisations commissioned by the SCO to provide services to support victims and prevent offending. Meetings were also held with volunteer panels appointed to help scrutinise services.

The appointment to the posts of Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer has taken place following a rigorous and robust recruitment process, attracting an impressive field of candidates from across the country to ensure best persons were selected who would drive their organisations forward and keep our communities safe.

The interviews were spread over two days, where candidates presented to stakeholders and staff panels and were then questioned by them on the first day, before being interviewed by the selection panel on the second day. Finally, both posts were subject to a Confirmation Hearing with the Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

F

Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

The SCO recognises that robust risk management is a key function in the delivery of the Internal Control Structure for the SCO, Force and FARS and continues to closely monitor the registers and arrangements for recording risk. Annually, or in the event of a change that may affect them, the SCO reviews the governance frameworks and the internal control structure to ensure that they are effective in delivering the required outcomes.

Effective risk management is assured by the SCO in a number of different ways:

- A detailed SCO Risk Management Policy reflective of both the Force and FARS policies;
- Representation at the quarterly Strategic Risk Management Group chaired by the Deputy CC;
- Representation at the quarterly Strategic Risk Management Meeting chaired by the CFO;
- SCO led Boards monitoring strategic risk for Force and FARS;
- Strategic Risk Register demonstrating a clear risk appetite is reviewed at SCO Management Meetings which are attended regularly by an ETAP Risk Management Champion;
- A SCO Operational Risk Register and the use of risk management techniques in programmes and projects;
- Financial risks identified and monitored by the SCO and Force Section 151 officers as part of the budget setting exercise and the development of the medium-term financial plan;
- The Governance Frameworks, Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and the development of appropriate policy and procedure;
- The use of the Internal Audit function where the annual audit plan is directed towards risk and emerging issues, as well as auditing the risks around standard finance functions;
- The ETAP, whose primary function is that of the Statutory Audit Committee also provides independent review of risk management and internal control frameworks through identified champions at review meetings and through thematic reviews;
- External reviews and inspections including thematic reviews by HMICFRS which inform the SCO, the Force and FARS highlighting risks and learning points in addition to good practice.
- Information Assurance Board, providing assurance against the areas of Data Protection legislation.

The financial performance of the Force, SCO and FARS is monitored through monthly budget monitoring reports that are discussed and reviewed as follows:

- The Strategic Governance Boards for both the Force and FARS receive detailed financial reports, with both boards chaired by the SC;
- The Finance Panel and ETAP received updates during 2021-22 from the Police, SCO and FARS;
- The Performance and Assurance Board: Fire (PAB) contained standard agenda items reviewing financial performance throughout the year;
- In addition, the SC holds a separate monthly Management Meeting which also reviews the latest financial position and forecast outturn.

Any material budget variances are reviewed in detail and reported through this robust governance framework, with appropriate action taken to understand the implications of variances and to take corrective action where necessary to manage the financial impact to the organisations as part of this good financial management and control.

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A mid-year review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was undertaken during 2021/22, this identified any significant issues arising and the impact upon the forecast outturn position and reserves. The update of the MTFS for Police, SCO and FARS was reported and scrutinised by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in addition to reporting to ETAP. This importantly included some positive updated assumptions impacting upon future council tax receipts as a result of the pandemic. Significant uncertainty remains across local government financing into the medium term, however the Force has delivered the savings set out within the approved budget and is now focusing firmly on delivery of the new Police Operating Model.

Overall there has been a positive financial position across the Force and SCO during the 2021/22 financial year with the reported year end revenue outturn position being favourable to budget, and whilst the pandemic has resulted in additional costs in year both Police and Fire have been supported by grant funding allocations provided by the Home Office and the use of earmarked reserves. This saving in year included a number of key areas with lower pay in year due to Police Officer and Police Staff Pay vacancies carried during the year. It should be noted however that this saving was due to the timing of recruitment with the required uplift in Police Officer numbers being over achieved at the end of March 2022, with the full uplift programme on track for March 2023. The Capital Financing Requirement has also reduced in year following additional revenue contributions to capital.

The impact of the positive revenue outturn position for 2021/22 has resulted in an improvement in Earmarked Reserves. Overall the General Reserve is compliant with the required minimum 3% level set by the Staffordshire Commissioner. Total Reserves have improved during the last three years, and whilst they are not considered high by sector standards the level of reserves is a visible sign of improving financial health for the group. Additional Earmarked Reserves have been allocated to ensure that funds are available to respond to future needs of the Force and Commissioner key priorities in order to deliver the Policing and Crime Plan for 2021-2024.

The Commissioning & Partnerships Team leads on commissioning services to assist the SC in the delivery of the strategic priorities. This will include some services that are a statutory requirement, such as the delivery of support to victims and witnesses and others that are intrinsic to the delivery of operational policing such as health care in custody services. Commissioning is often carried out in collaboration with partner agencies to deliver more effective, joined-up and better value services. Performance frameworks are in place where appropriate to ensure delivery against the specified outcomes.

Regional arrangements are in place to ensure oversight of services delivered in collaboration. Such services include the Regional Organised Crime Unit and Counter Terrorism Unit (across Staffordshire, West Midlands, West Mercia and Warwickshire police force areas), the Central Motorway Police Group (a collaboration between Staffordshire and West Midlands forces) and Staffordshire/West Midlands Fire Control. The SC chairs the regional collaboration group for policing that provides strategic direction, performance and financial accountability.

Action 1: AGS 2020/21

In June and July of 2021 the SCO Head of Governance & Assurance led a full review of the SCO Governance arrangements and Internal Control and Escalation Structure to give a refreshed view post the commencement of the new PFCC in May 2021.

The refreshed structure made provision for:

- The retirement in June 2021 of the Staffordshire Police Chief Constable.
- Ensuring governance, meeting structures, membership etc are streamlined, relevant and up to date; ensuring that they can be effective in assisting the Commissioner to meet the statutory obligations, i.e. securing an efficient and effective force and holding to account the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer.
- Appropriate SCO representation and involvement in Board Level governance arrangements of both Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue.
- The future plans for collaborative working with shared services evolving to business as usual and the requirement to further explore opportunities within the joint estate provision.

The new SCO Governance arrangements and Internal Control and Escalation Structure was approved by the Strategic Governance Boards for both Police and Fire and can be seen in Appendix B.



Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The SC and the SCO are continually committed in having the most robust system of public accountability and transparency. The SCO is compliant with the Freedom of Information Act and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for Right of Access, and endeavours to respond to all requests in the required time frame. This ensures that the public are able to access the information that legislation entitles them to. The SC uses 'live' webcasts of the Public Performance meetings, and Police, Fire and Crime Panel meetings. ETAP Public meeting documents and minutes are all published on the website.

In February 2020 with the introduction of the Police Misconduct and Complaints Regulations the SCO took on the responsibility for the independent review of police and Chief Constable complaints. The SCO continues to and meet the obligations under the Police Appeals Tribunal Regulations, working with the relevant parties to ensure appropriate support to those processes is given. ETAP conducted a review of the processes surrounding these new regulations which was published in October 2021 and can be found here:

[ETAP-Review-of-Staffordshire-Police-Complaints-FINAL.pdf \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](#)

In 2021 the SCO was again awarded the CoPaCC Transparency Mark. CoPaCC is an independent organisation, established in early 2013 to assess the work of Police and Crime Commissioners through objective, evidence-based analysis of delivery of the statutory obligations of document publication and access to information.



The SCO has a Partnerships and Commissioning Register to help to inform the public about commissioning activities of the SCO to achieve a greater level of transparency. The Register captures:

- the essential details of the partnership or commissioned activity,
- how it links to SC strategic priorities,
- the importance and impact of the partnering/commissioned organisation is to the SCO objectives and;
- how performance is being managed through governance arrangements so that objectives and outcomes are realised, delivering the necessary value for money requirement.

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel monitor and challenge the SC in delivery of the priorities at regular quarterly meetings. They have a work programme that is aligned with the Police and Crime Plan 2021-24 and the Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-24 and have a statutory role in scrutinising the Annual Report and the proposed budget and precept. The Panel also hold the SC to account on specific matters, such as performance management and HMICFRS inspections.

ETAP undertakes the statutory functions of an Audit Committee and operates in accordance with the Financial Management Code of Practice for the Police Service and CIPFA's Practical Guidelines for Local Authorities. ETAP receive regular training to assist them in undertaking their role. In line with best practice, an internal annual self-assessment was carried out in April 2021 for ETAP and found that there were no areas where concerns we raised regarding effectiveness of ETAP.

The ETAP Finance Panel provides particular focus on finance issues and is chaired by one of the two Deputy Chairs of ETAP, providing for a dual focus at different meetings. ETAP continues to make recommendations to the SC, CC and CFO according to good governance principles and ETAP monitor these recommendations for completion. Also conducted by ETAP is the monitoring of Strategic Risk, recommending for approval the AGS and the Statement of Accounts as well as putting decisions made by the SC, the Force and FARS through public scrutiny.

ETAP has had operational oversight of SCO business in 2021/22 through designated champions in the areas of Strategic Risk Management and also the Election 2021 working group. These champions act both as a critical friend and provide assurance to ETAP members on processes in place within the SCO, with the ability to make informal recommendations to the SCO as a result of their observations. ETAP has also strengthened its oversight of ethical standards and functions in 2021/22 with the development of the Ethics and Review Panel as described in section A.

The Internal and External Audit functions also provide scrutiny across the SCO, the Force and FARS. Their conclusions and recommendations will always form an important aspect of the organisations improvement plans.

Systems of internal control are key to managing the risk of fraud within the SCO, Force and FARS and these are annually audited and reported to ETAP and the Strategic Risk Management Meeting where risks are managed and monitored.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit role is independent and used to provide support, assurance and evidence compliance for the organisations.

The Director of Internal Audit ensures assurance arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010).

The Head of Internal Audit plays a critical role in scrutinising the organisation's by:-

- Championing best practice in governance, objectively assessing the adequacy of governance and management of existing risks, commenting on responses to emerging risks and proposed developments; and
- Providing an objective and evidence based opinion on all aspects of governance, risk management and internal control.

The Head of Internal Audit ensures that there is an annual strategy and audit plan and that these are developed on a risk assessed basis. Audit outcomes are presented to management and to ETAP, the latter in detail through the Finance Panel and in the full ETAP forum, which is open to the public. Areas for improvement identified in 2021/22 audits have been reviewed with action plans established to improve as necessary. Actions are monitored and managed through corporate governance arrangements and reported on through ETAP to review progress.

This work culminates in the annual audit opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal controls reviewed by the audit team. This annual opinion, set out in the Annual Report of the Head of Internal Audit, is one of the key sources of evidence in support of the AGS(s). The Annual Internal Audit Report (May 2022) concludes that for the 12 months ended 31 March 2022, the audit opinion for the Staffordshire Commissioners Office is as follows:

The opinion

For the 12 months ended 31 March 2022, the Head of Internal Audit opinion for Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner of Staffordshire (SPFCC) is as follows:



External Audit

External Audit discharge a statutory function because of the special accountabilities attached to public money and how public business is conducted. External Audit are appointed independently from the SCO, the audit team complete an annual Audit Plan covering the work to be undertaken, including:

- An audit opinion on whether the financial statements of the SCO gives a true and fair view of the financial position and of the income and expenditure for the financial year end;
- A conclusion on the SCO arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

External Audit also review and report to the National Audit Office (NAO) on the SCO Whole of Government Accounts return and conduct mandatory procedures in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice and the Statement of Responsibilities issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd. In completing this work External Audit take into account several key inputs:

- Strategic, operational and financial risks relevant to the financial statements;
- Developments in financial reporting and auditing standards;
- The quality of systems and processes;
- Changes in the business and regulatory environment; and,
- Management's views on all of the above.

The SCO and the Force external auditors, (Ernst and Young LLP), and FARS external auditors (Grant Thornton LLP) provide regular reports at ETAP's public meetings and meet as required in private. ETAP members due to their independence have the opportunity to consider the audit findings, to challenge and ask for further clarification where necessary and also to make recommendations on their findings.

4. Overall Level of Assurance

Actions taken against the 2020/21 AGS actions, as reported in this AGS have strengthened and enhanced the governance arrangements for the SCO. In addition the significant preparation in 2020/21 for the commencement of the term of office for the newly elected Staffordshire Commissioner, ensured a seamless transition and effective continuation of business as usual throughout the 100 day plan.

The SCO has a system of internal control which is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. Internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Staffordshire Commissioners priorities.

The SC is satisfied that appropriate stewardship is being applied to the use of resources by the SCO in order to serve the public interest and to adhere to legislation and policy and ethical values and respect of the law.

5. Significant Governance Issues (Actions 2021/22)

The continuous monitoring of the Governance Framework has led to a strengthening of processes and allowed for areas of continuous improvement.

Issue 01

Limited reporting on ESG by Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue & Staffordshire Commissioners Office.

Recommendation:

That the SCO looks to guidance issued by CIPFA &/or the Treasury Management Code to enhance reporting on ESG.

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Issue 02

Closure of Safer Neighbourhood Panels & launch of Commissioner Independent Scrutiny Panels.

Recommendation:

That ETAP undertake a review to the project plan and implementation stages of CISP in Autumn 2022. In addition that a further review be conducted on the operational processes of CISP and its governance arrangements in March 2023.

Issue 03

Independent Custody Visitor Associated Quality Assurance Assessment October 2023.

Recommendation:

That the Governance & Assurance Team gain assurance through Internal Audit that actions identified as required in the new grading system be completed and associated evidence be maintained.

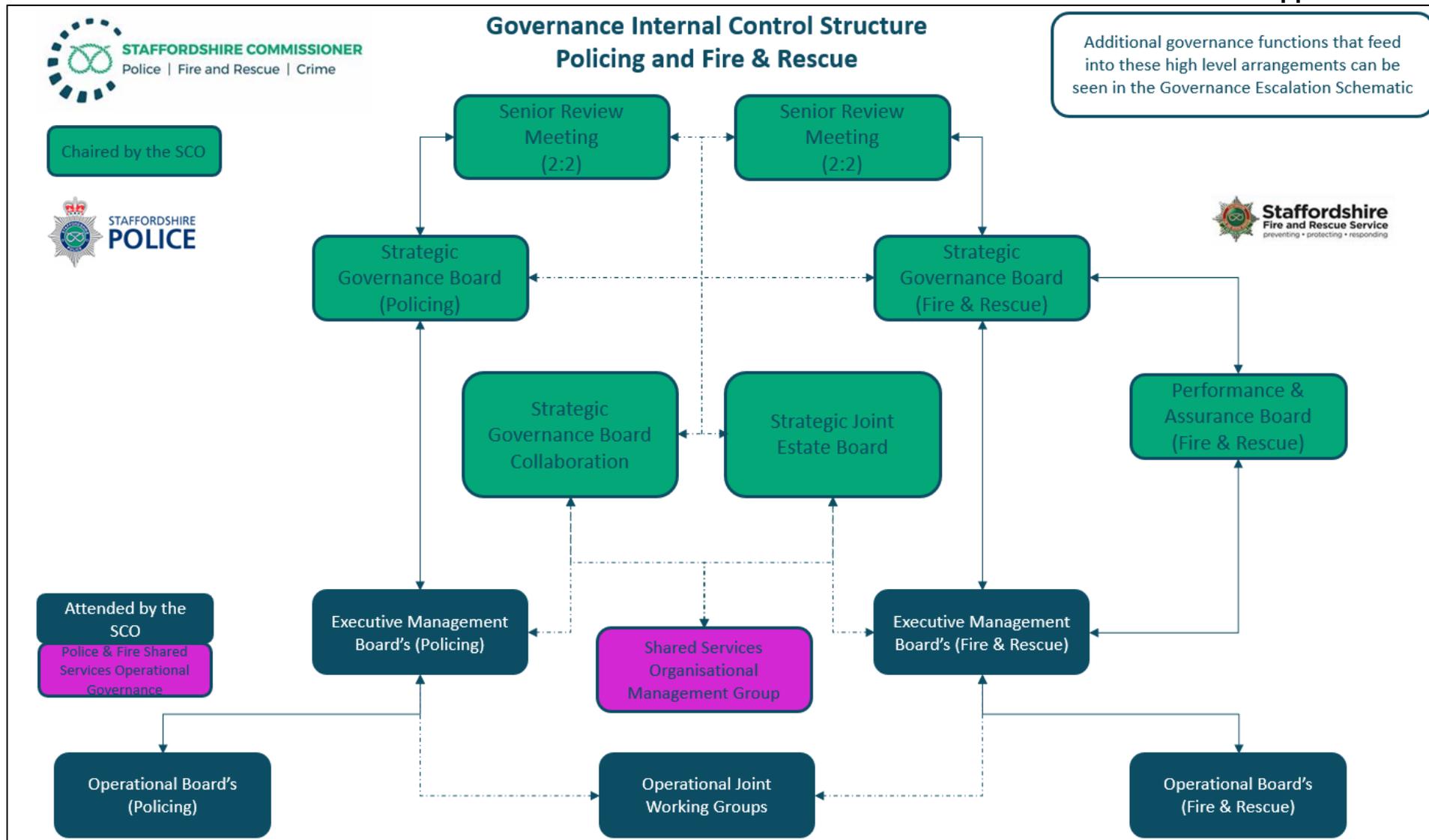
The details given within this statement represent a realistic view of the governance arrangements that are in place for the SCO and that for 2021/22 there is recognition that whilst there is strong evidence of good practice, there is also a need for further and continuous improvement to strengthen arrangements, to ensure that the organisation achieves its intended outcomes whilst acting in the public interest at all times.

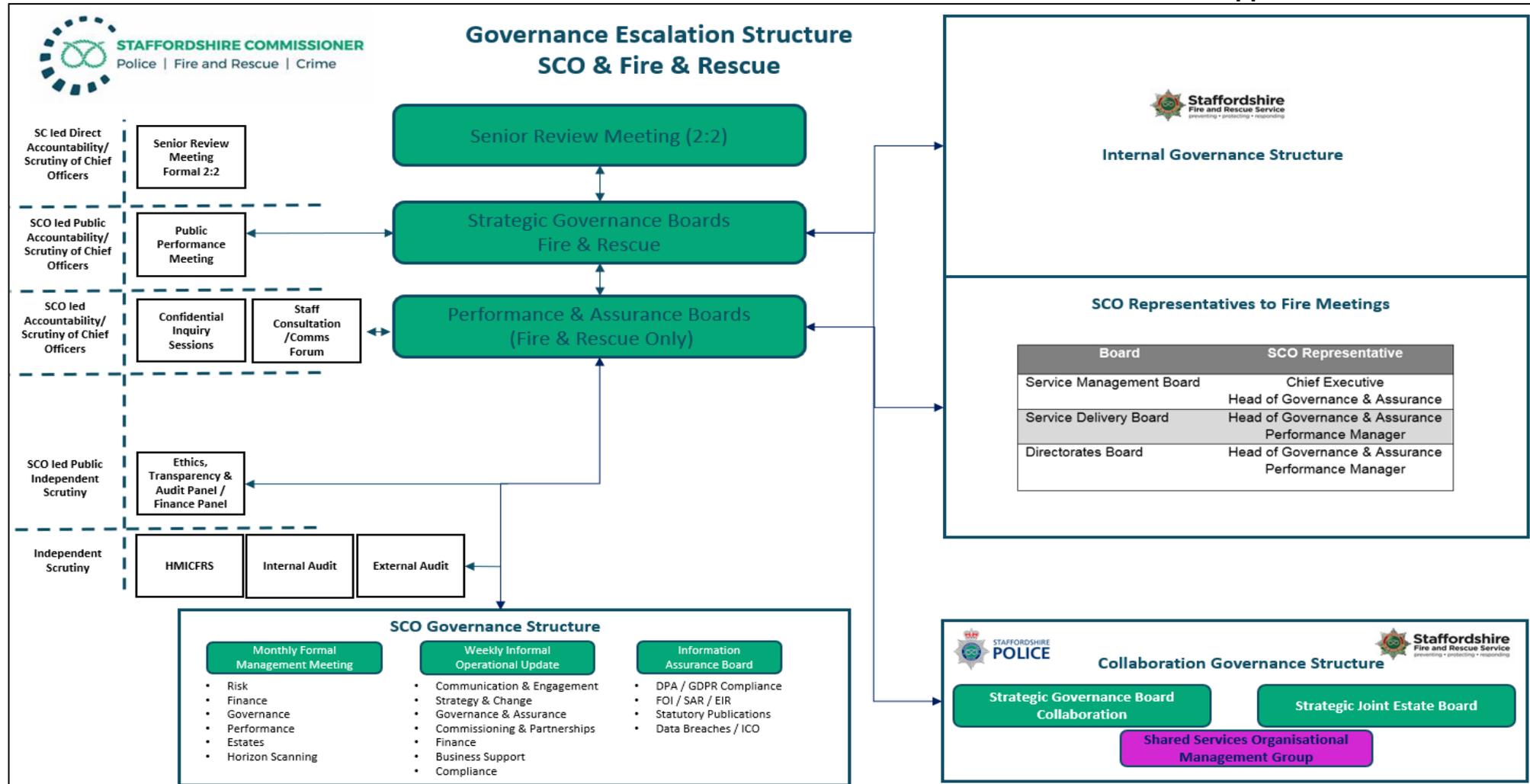
The issues identified above and the planned action in 2022/23 will enable the SCO to ensure that the statutory obligation of setting the strategic direction is fulfilled, that the governance frameworks and internal control procedures are robust, supportive of that strategic direction and fully meet the requirements as set out by CIPFA's good governance guidance.

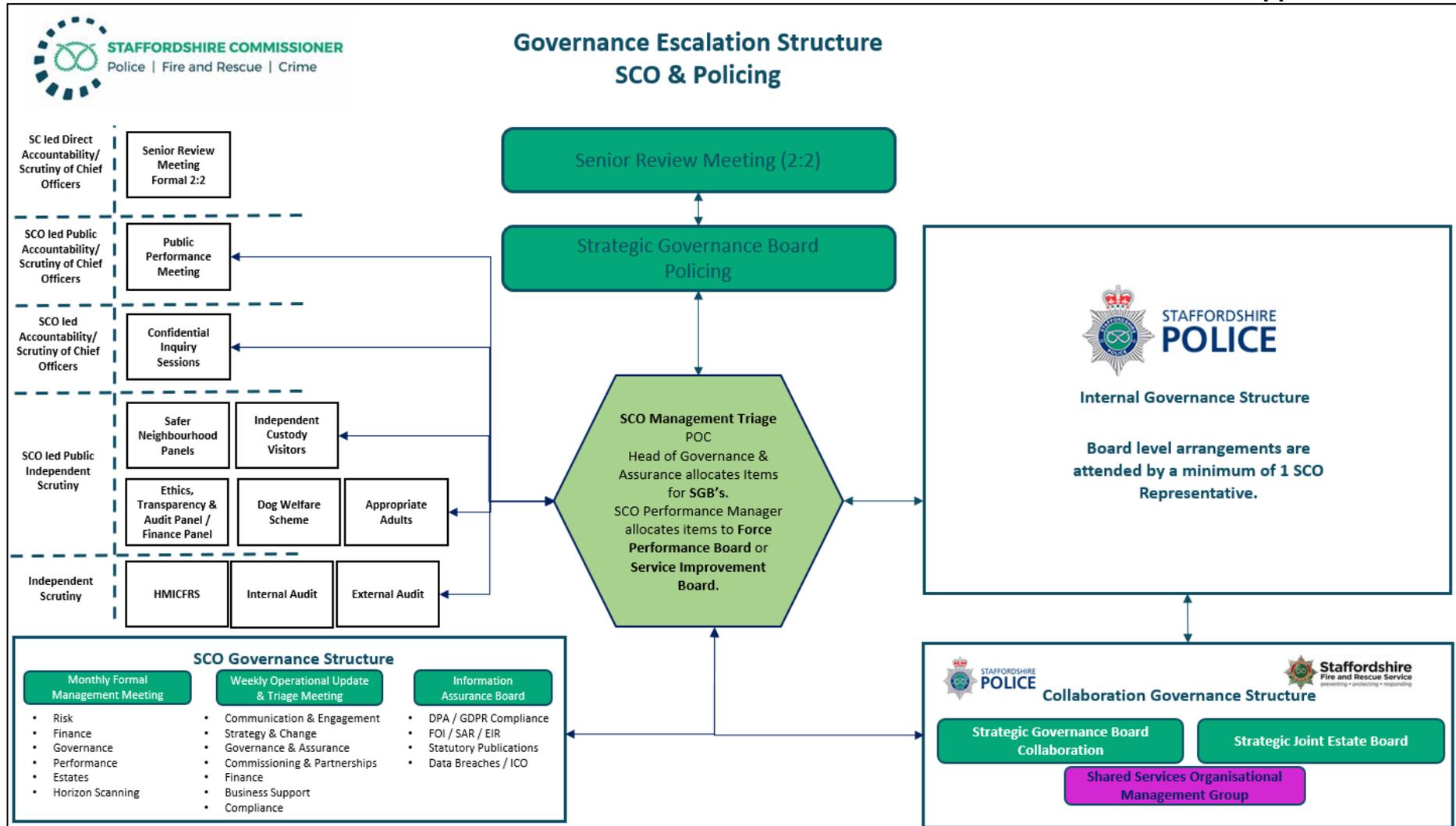
		
Ben Adams Staffordshire Commissioner, Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime.	Louise Clayton Chief Executive Staffordshire Commissioners Office	Katherine Ross Director of Finance (S151) Staffordshire Commissioners Office

AGS Action Plan: 2020/2021

Ref No	Issue	Action	Update given on Page
1	In 2018/19 effective amendments were made to the governance arrangements across the SCO, Force and FARS. A review of internal control and escalation would be timely due to further collaborative work having taken place, revised departmental and directorate restructures and a new SC taking post.	The SCO is to undertake a review in 2021/22 of the governance arrangements, specifically the internal control and escalation structure as seen in Appendix B, to ensure fit for purpose and where possible create further efficiency across the organisations.	17
2	Part 1 of the PCC review by the Home Office has been published in March 2021. The outcomes from Part 1 of the review will significantly impact on the office and the police service during 2020/21. Part 2 of the review will also commence in 2020/21. The PFCC model is rare across England and as such the complexities with the model need to be included in the consultation.	The SCO to implement Part 1 requirements in conjunction with both operational services and ensure appropriate feedback to the Home Office consultation on Part 2 of the PCC review.	11
3	<p>The election for PFCC will take place on 6 May 2021. The role undertaken by the individual has statutory responsibilities relating to two public services in Staffordshire, with also significant local regional and national roles that need to be understood to ensure appropriate governance and oversight is applied.</p> <p>Both the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer announced their retirement during 2020/21, with the Chief Constable leaving in June 2021.</p>	<p>The SCO is to develop and deliver a full induction package including a plan for the first 100 days in office of the new PFCC, ensuring that the new incumbent and any deputies are assisted in maintaining continuity, whilst also having the ability to bring their own strategic intent to the fore.</p> <p>A recruitment process for a new Chief Constable & Chief Fire Officer will take place during 2021/22. The office will work with the College of Policing the National Fire Chiefs Council and other local partners to ensure a robust process that attracts good applicants and ultimately excellent appointments.</p>	14
4	ETAP raised through consultation of this annual AGS that there was limited information or reporting associated with principle 'C' within the specifically surrounding sustainability.	The SCO to look to enhance provision of information surrounding sustainability agendas across the SCO, Force and FARS in the next AGS for FY 2021/22.	12







AGS Action Plan: 2022/2023

Ref No	Issue	Action
1	Limited reporting on ESG by Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue & Staffordshire Commissioners Office.	<i>That the SCO looks to guidance issued by CIPFA &/or the Treasury Management Code to enhance reporting on ESG.</i>
2	Closure of Safer Neighbourhood Panels & launch of Commissioner Independent Scrutiny Panels.	<i>That ETAP undertake a review to the project plan and implementation stages of CISP in Autumn 2022. In addition that a further review be conducted on the operational processes of CISP and its governance arrangements in March 2023.</i>
3	Independent Custody Visitor Associated Quality Assurance Assessment October 2023.	<i>That the Governance & Assurance Team gain assurance through Internal Audit that actions identified as required in the new grading system be completed and associated evidence be maintained.</i>