



STAFFORDSHIRE COMMISSIONER

Police | Fire and Rescue | Crime

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Scope of Responsibility	3
3. Implementation	5-19
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	
4. Overall Level of Assurance	19
5. Significant Governance Issues	21
Appendix A: Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2022/23	22
Appendix B: Internal Control Structure	23
Appendix C: Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2023/24	27

Glossary

AA*	Appropriate Adults	Force	Staffordshire Police
AGS	Annual Governance Statement	HMICFRS	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
APACE	Association of Police Authority Chief Executives	ICV*	Independent Custody Visitors
CC	Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police	CISP*	Commissioner's Independent Scrutiny Panel
CFO	Chief Fire Officer of Staffordshire Fire & 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 and Audit Panel	SCO	Staffordshire Commissioner's Office
ETAP ERP*	Ethics Review Panel for ETAP	SGB	Strategic Governance Board
ETAP FP*	Finance Panel for ETAP		
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 Service.

This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) prepared by my office provides the public of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent with an overview of how I have ensured compliance with the published Corporate Governance Frameworks for the year ending 31 March 2024.

My office has done a fantastic job in securing almost £5 million in additional funding from Safer Streets, the Safety of Women at Night fund and the ASB hotspot pilot funding to help tackle the issue of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and improve the safety of women and girls. This funding has been utilised in the way intended, with all reporting requirements you would expect with this level of funding being met. It's immensely important for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent residents to see and feel the benefit of these and similar provisions commissioned by my office; more on these can be found contained in my Annual Reports, available via this link:

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

Furthermore, with the cost of living crisis directly affecting our communities, my office, Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service are committed to obtaining the best possible value for money, through effective commissioning, procurement and management processes that are supported by robust governance arrangements.

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

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

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 Service (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 Commissioner's 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 (CIPFA) 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.

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 & Crime Plan (Force) and the Fire & Rescue Plan (FARS) that seek 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 and 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:

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

2023/24	Internal Audit Provider	External Audit Provider
SCO	RSM (UK Group LLP)	Azets Audit Services LTD
Force	RSM (UK Group LLP)	Azets Audit Services LTD
FARS	RSM (UK Group LLP)	Azets Audit Services LTD

The Governance Frameworks are supported by:

- Performance management frameworks, which are focused on monitoring and achieving the objectives set out in the Police & 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 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 Commissioner's Independent Scrutiny Panels (CISP).
- 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 and up-to-date training on strategic and tactical matters;
- Codes of Conduct and standards of behaviour clearly set out in governance documents and signed off by the SC.

Contained within the Governance Frameworks is the Code of Corporate Governance which sets out seven 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 and improved accountability, ensuring that organisations achieve their intended outcomes whilst operating in the public interest at all times.

The seven 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

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

- 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 2022/23 AGS have been addressed. All previous years have been actioned.

In summary, these actions were:

1. The SCO will work with the Force and FARS to develop an overarching community engagement strategy to drive a consistent and cohesive approach and avoid duplication of initiatives between the three organisations.
2. The SCO will support the implementation of further joint Police and Fire stations in a number of locations across Staffordshire during 2023/24. These will be secondary bases in smaller towns where buildings will be shared by neighbourhood policing constables, PCSOs and retained firefighter crews.
3. The SCO builds on the work so far and this handbook is to be accompanied by a new approach to Personal Development Reviews to ensure clear accountability for delivering SCO plans and identification of training and development needs of staff. A new staffing structure is also to be implemented to ensure the SCO has the right mix of skills and capacity to deliver programmes and manage business as usual effectively.
4. The SCO continues with the below additional measures:
 - Active monitoring of areas for improvement and performance-related information and additional performance briefings;
 - The Chief Executive attending monthly meetings to oversee progress with the HMICFRS Liaison Officer;
 - The Chief Executive will meet weekly with the DCC with HMICFRS as a standing agenda item;
 - The Chief Executive will meet weekly with the CC and his Deputy with HMICFRS as a standing agenda item;
 - The Commissioner will hold informal meetings with HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams;
 - The Commissioner and Chief Executive will meet regularly with the HMICFRS Liaison officer.
5. The SCO notes the content and recommendations made within the Baroness Casey Review and considers these when gathering information and assurances for the SC to assist in holding the CC to account.

The full Action Plan for 2022/23 can be seen in Appendix A.
For completeness, actions identified against this 2023/24 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 that promotes openness, integrity and compliance with relevant laws, regulations and policies throughout the organisation. The SC has signed up to a published Code of Conduct which is underpinned by the Nolan Principles of public life.

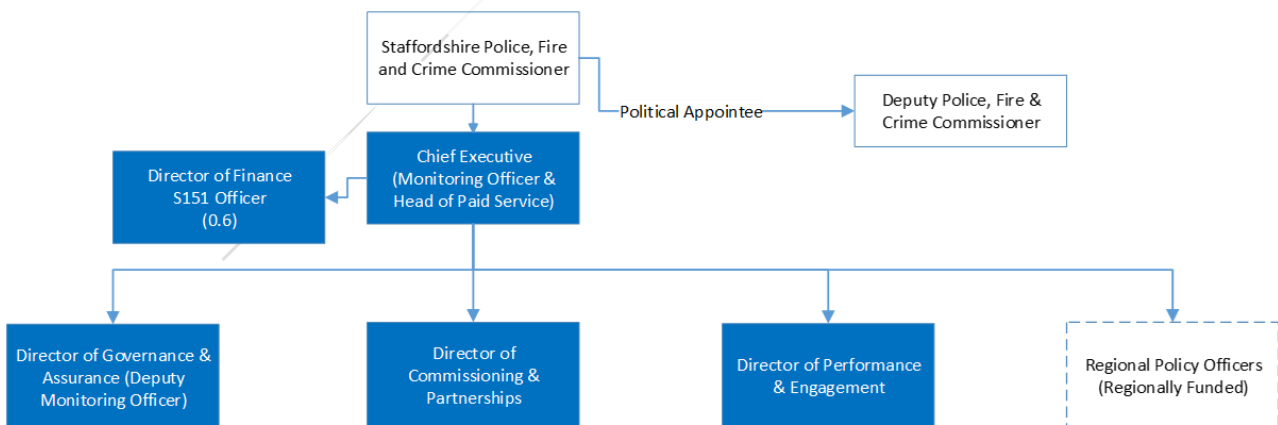
The SCO Chief Executive is the designated Monitoring Officer as well as the ‘Head of Paid Service’ for the purposes of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Head of Paid Service aspect of the Chief Executive role means taking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

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 to the scope and extent of responsibilities and the detailed legal and statutory obligations that exist.¹

During 2023/24 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 2023/24 review of the Corporate Governance Frameworks.

Key posts within the SCO include:



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

In total, the SCO has a team of 28.6 fulltime equivalents; some of these roles, although employed and managed by the SCO, are temporary positions funded through time-limited 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 utilises IT and Financial Services provided by the Force.

Staff work within a structure with job descriptions and 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 organisation's 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 training events to ensure that they are up to date and aware of changes to guidance, legislation and practice across all services.

Action 3: AGS 2022/23

In spring 2023, a full review of SCO roles and the office staffing structure was concluded by the SCO Chief Executive, supported by the Senior Management Team. The aim of the review was to ensure the office structure was fit for purpose and adequately resourced, delivering the right activities in the right proportions, and that all staff were equipped with the right skills to deliver the SCO priorities. On this basis, a new structure was proposed and following formal staff consultation was implemented in summer 2023. This has resulted in greater clarity and understanding of roles and purpose, and a more efficient office structure. Work has continued at pace to attract and retain talent, with a greater focus on providing professional learning and development opportunities for staff.

SCO staff also comply with the Force standards for management of Police information and have access to the Force 'Bad Apple' reporting portal for Whistleblowing. Where there is a conflict of 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), a sub-group of ETAP, was launched in January 2021 and in the current year has included revisiting some earlier reviews on complaints handling and staff welfare and well-being during Covid, to ensure that progress had been made. The Panel has continued to provide scrutiny in relation to ethical behaviour and professional standards within the services. ERP received a presentation regarding the Force's 'Know the Line' campaign, relating to the abuse of position for sexual purposes in policing. ERP have also been involved in looking at the processes surrounding HMICFRS reports and Areas for Improvement at the request of the SC and Chief Constable. Additionally, reviews have also been undertaken relating to:

- the Management & Reporting of Gifts and Hospitality for all three organisations,
- how the Grenfell 1 recommendations have been implemented in FARS,
- how the project to create the Commissioner's Independent Scrutiny Panels (CISP) in place of Safer Neighbourhood Panels was carried out and if 12 months after the launch the outcomes and feedback loops were operating as expected.

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

All review work undertaken by ERP when completed is published on the SCO website and can be found via the following link: [Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel - Staffordshire Commissioner \(staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk\)](https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/ethics-transparency-and-audit-panel-staffordshire-commissioner)

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 working 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 receive and disseminate 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 & 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:

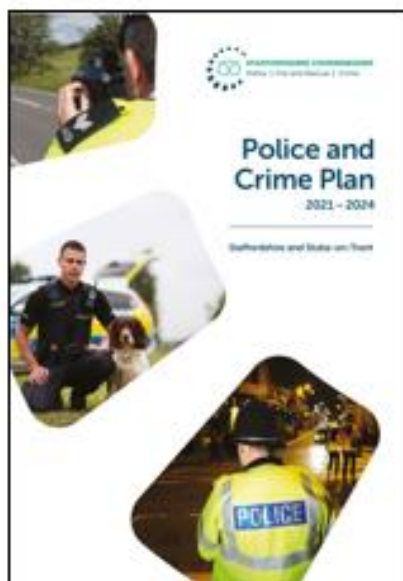
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it and;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic 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 to policing and crime clear in the election manifesto and embedded this with the development and publication of a Police & Crime Plan 2021-24. In addition, the SC, through responsibility for the governance of Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, has developed and published a Fire & 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 signing up to a published Code of Conduct which is underpinned by the Nolan Principles of public life;
- SCO staff complying with the Nolan Principles and other policies and responsibilities e.g. information-sharing protocols;
- The SC's Police & Crime Plan 2021-24, Fire & Rescue Plan 2021-24 and other published documents, including the Annual Report, the budget report and the Annual 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 SC's intentions;
- 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 and 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, CISP, ICVs, AAs 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 and there is provision for questions from members of the public;
- ETAP Reviews, CISP 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, such as precept consultations;
- 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 CISPs. 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;
- Commissioning a public confidence survey to understand levels of public confidence in policing in Staffordshire, gauge people's feelings of safety and capture residents' concerns. Telephone and face-to-face surveys were carried out in June 2023 with a representative sample of over 1,600 residents and a further survey is planned for March 2024.

Action 1: AGS 2022/23

A joint Community Engagement Strategy has been drafted. This is a high-level overview setting out the desired outcomes of the SC, CC and CFO from engagement processes. The SCO continues to work with the Force to ensure youth engagement approaches are compatible and complementary. The Force issued a Neighbourhood Policing Strategy, a key strand of which is engaging communities, visibility and accessibility. Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service commenced a community engagement and consultation process as part of the development of the Community Risk Management Plan.

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 Combatting Drugs Partnership,
- the Local Criminal Justice Partnership Board,
- the Commissioning and Development Boards for Victims,
- the Domestic Abuse and Offender Management Boards,
- the Violence Reduction Alliance Executive Board.

Police and Crime Commissioners also work jointly at a regional level, leading a Regional Governance Group, attended by Chief Constables, that oversees a number of regional collaboration agreements and a Regional Criminal Justice Forum. The SCO also attends local strategic and operational boards, along with task and finish groups, across a broad portfolio including adult and

children's safeguarding and young people. These structures enable and support partnership working, and provide opportunities to influence the development of multi-agency strategies, streamline planning, and joint commissioning and delivery of a broad range of activity and services, and provides the forum for stakeholders to monitor performance and constructively challenge one another and hold each other to account,

The SCO keeps local MPs and Councillors informed on the work of the SC and the office by sharing all news releases, including releases of particular importance issued by the Force and FARS. The SCO is a member of local and regional forums, where updates and activities can be shared with key strategic partners.

SC accountability is tested and challenged through a number of channels. These include the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, comprised of elected members representing local authorities from across Staffordshire who meet on a quarterly basis. The Police, Fire and Crime Panel holds the SC to account, scrutinises the SCO, Force and FARS performance and regularly reviews and scrutinises 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 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)

The SC is required to publish certain information to allow the public to hold them to account. Section 11(1) and (2) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires an elected local Policing body to publish any information specified by the Secretary of State by order. The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) Order 2011 ('the Order') sets out the information that must be published. Guidance on the order is published on gov.uk and Staffordshire's information is published clearly on the SC's website.

The national priorities for Policing are specified in the Police and Crime Measures: reduce murder and other homicide; reduce serious violence; disrupt drugs supply and county lines; reduce neighbourhood crime; tackle cybercrime; and improve satisfaction among victims with a particular focus on victims of domestic abuse. The intention of these measures is to complement existing local priorities set out in PCCs' local Police & Crime Plans. Each Force has a key role in supporting the measures, so that collectively we can see real improvements in outcomes over the four years from the baseline of June 2019.

The Order requires PCCs to provide a statement on the contribution of their Force to achieving improvements against those priorities. The SC complies with these requirements via the [Public Performance mechanism](#) where the quarterly Police and Crime Measures are reported and discussed. The SC publishes his reflections on Force performance and how the Force has contributed towards the delivery of the national measures, including contextual information that might help explain that contribution and the summary of planned action for the next quarter to drive the Force's performance against applicable measures.



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

The strategic priorities are set out in the Police & Crime Plan 2021-24 and the Fire & 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:

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, Thematic Reviews and CISP Scrutiny Reports.

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 SCO-chaired Strategic Governance Board and SCO attendance at all senior board level meetings, and SC and 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 Frameworks 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. These plans are closely monitored by the SCO Chief Executive.

The SC's commitment to protecting frontline resources requires that the office devolved 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 & Crime Plan 2021-24 and the Fire & Rescue Plan 2021-24, for which progress is also reported to the Panel.

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

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.

Through the Local Business Case for Joint Governance of the Police Service and Fire & Rescue Service in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, collaborative working has continued to mature and grow. The joint enabling services are governed by the Strategic Collaboration Board, which regularly reviews opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness and identify new areas for collaboration. This year has seen development of a new shared EDI team, and changes to the shared estates team, working across Police and Fire, both of which will improve service delivery in the most cost effective and efficient way.

Action 2: AGS 2022/23

In September 2023 the Strategic Collaboration Board approved a further 5 sites be progressed as shared estates. Penkridge and Kinver are being developed as drop-in centres for Police Officers and PCSOs, and Stone, Uttoxeter and Kidsgrove will become a main operating base. Progressing all 5 will utilise excess capacity within the Fire estate, overall resulting in financial savings, improved joint working between Police and Fire and increased awareness of Police presence in communities.

D

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

Business plans are aligned and monitored against strategic priorities by each of the teams within the SCO to ensure that identified progress against those 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 preceding 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 communities 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 SC. A Strategic Governance Board for Collaboration and the Strategic Joint Estates Board oversee progress in developing collaborative arrangements and shared facilities between the two services to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

Action 4: AGS 2022/23

The SCO continues with the below additional measures:

- Active monitoring of areas for improvement and performance-related information and additional performance briefings;
- The Chief Executive attends the monthly Force HMICFRS Board;
- The Chief Executive meets weekly with the DCC with HMICFRS as a standing agenda item;
- The SC and Chief Executive meet monthly with the CC and DCC and HMICFRS and Police Performance and Oversight Group (PPOG) is a standing agenda item.
- The SC attends quarterly PPOG meetings with the CC.
- The SC holds informal meetings with HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams;
- The SC and Chief Executive meet regularly with the HMICFRS Liaison officer

Significant progress has been made during the year: in December 2023 HMICFRS discharged one of the two Accelerated Areas of Concern (AAoC), Responding to the Public and in January 2024 3 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) were formally discharged.

As at the 21 May 2024 HMICFRS, in consultation with other police stakeholders, including the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing, removed Staffordshire Police from the 'Engage' enhanced monitoring process after demonstrating improvements in its service. The SC will continue to closely monitor the force's performance on behalf of the communities of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to ensure that this momentum is maintained.



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). The SCO utilises the Regional Policy Officer resource to

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

develop new areas of work, such as the Local Combatting Drugs Partnership, and to maximise opportunities to commission services jointly for better outcomes.

The SC has promoted partnership working as a key facet of delivering the strategic objectives, and the involvement of the SCO Commissioning Team in these arrangements ensures that the SCO has a voice. This involves the SCO working closely with a wide range of partners, local authorities, Criminal Justice System agencies, NHS 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 bring together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes to deliver a set of goals. The Frameworks have 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 the internal structures associated Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue can be found within their Annual Governance Statement.

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 continues to meet, focusing on an identified number of priorities and the agreed action plan. There is also an established link with the regional LCJPB, where matters for broader consideration are escalated. The outcome of the National PCC Review is still awaited in this regard and may further strengthen this arrangement.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Community Safety Forum continues to bring together responsible authorities and other relevant organisations to deliver collaboratively on community safety outcomes for local people and local communities. It meets quarterly and provides a structure for key organisations to collectively focus resources and investment on shared priorities. This year a number of focus areas have been identified and progressed, including ASB and illegal trespass.

The SCO continues to operate as the Senior Responsible Officer for the county-wide, multi-agency Drug and Alcohol Partnership (DAP), which oversees local delivery of the national drug strategy 'From Harm to Hope'. Action plans are well developed for each of the priority areas: drug supply, treatment and recovery and attitudinal change alongside a performance framework. Progress and performance are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Whilst the national focus for these partnerships is to deliver the national drug strategy, locally a decision has been taken to extend the brief to incorporate alcohol, recognising its significance and impact locally. To this end, an alcohol steering group has been established; its first task is to complete an alcohol needs assessment. The DAP provides a single setting for understanding and addressing shared challenges related to drug and alcohol-related harm, based on the local context and need.

The Violence Reduction Alliance (VRA) continues to oversee the delivery of the local Violence Reduction Strategy and is the accountable body for delivery of the Serious Violence Duty. To this end, the VRA Board held a conference to review delivery against the existing strategy, has undertaken consultation and signed off a new Violence Reduction Strategy. Action plans to implement the Strategy are being developed and will be overseen the VRA Board. The Board has also agreed allocation of the Serious Violence Duty monies, ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Serious Violence Duty. The SC is the convenor and chair of the VRA Board.

Action 5: AGS 2022/23

The SCO Senior Management Team included the Baroness Casey Review as an agenda item at their May 2023 meeting. All senior managers were asked to review the report in preparation for the meeting by the SCO Chief Executive. The SC advised that as the report was not relating to Staffordshire Police no direct action on the recommendations within it would be taken, but that the recommendations made must be borne in mind when attending Force Boards as the SCO Representative.

The SC requested the Force consider the review, its findings and to provide a reflective report from a Staffordshire Police perspective to SGB. This report came to SGB in September 2023 and was acknowledged by the board.

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 and are fit for purpose.

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 Meeting chaired by the CFO;
- SCO-led Boards receiving and monitoring strategic risk for Force and FARS;
- Strategic Risk Register demonstrating a clear risk appetite is reviewed at SCO Management Meetings which is then reported routinely to ETAP Finance Panel;
- 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 insight meetings and when completing 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.

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

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 as a standard agenda item, with both boards chaired by the SC;
- The Finance Panel and ETAP receive quarterly updates from the Police, SCO and FARS;
- In addition, the SC holds a separate monthly SCO 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.

A mid-year review of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was undertaken during 2023/24, 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 November 2023 in addition to reporting to ETAP. This importantly reported on the significant uncertainty arising from cost pressures on pay and also the impact of high inflation on cost and estimated the impact in year and into the medium term. The Force has delivered the savings set out within the approved budget and has managed robustly the cost pressures arising during the year.

Despite the significant financial challenges, there has been a positive financial position across the Force and SCO during the 2023/24 financial year, with the reported year end revenue outturn position slightly favourable to budget. This small underspend in year included an overspend on overtime offset by the number of vacancies carried during the year. It should be noted that the Force end the year with headcount above the Target Operating Model numbers. The small underspend is also as a result of additional income from cash investments due to the higher than expected interest rates.

The impact of the positive revenue outturn position for 2023/24 has resulted in an improvement in Earmarked Reserves. The General Reserve is compliant with the required minimum 3% level set by the SC. Total Reserves have improved during the last four years, and whilst they are not considered high by sector standards, the level of reserves is a visible sign of sustained and improved financial health for the group. A budget support reserve has been earmarked to support the MTFS pressures arising in 2024/25 as a result of significantly increasing costs experienced during the year.

The Commissioning & Partnerships Team lead on the development and maintenance of partnership arrangements, whilst overseeing the commissioning of services to assist the SC in the delivery of the Police & Crime Plan and any strategic priorities devolved nationally. This includes some services that are a statutory requirement, such as the delivery of support to victims and witnesses, interventions to address violence and substance misuse, and others that are intrinsic to the prevention of crime (such as personal development programmes for children vulnerable to crime) and 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. Multi-agency boards, action plans, contracts and performance frameworks are in place as needed 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, Counter Terrorism Unit (across Staffordshire, West Midlands, West Mercia and Warwickshire Police Force areas), the Central Motorway Police

Group and Firearms Licencing (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.

Regional arrangements for Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) changed in 2023, following the withdrawal of West Midlands Police from the collaboration a new S22 agreement between Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia commenced in the summer of 2023, working with Staffordshire University. The SC and Chief Executive are members of the PEQF regional governance board, with strategic oversight and responsibility for performance and financial accountability.



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

The SC and the SCO are continually committed to 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 timeframe. 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.

The SCO has Partnerships and Commissioning Strategy. The Strategy outlines:

- The function of the team,
- Commissioning methodology,
- Commissioning aims and principles,
- Budgets available and their application.

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel monitors and challenges the SC in delivery of the priorities at regular quarterly meetings. The Panel has a work programme that is aligned with the Police & Crime Plan 2021-24 and the Fire & Rescue Plan 2021-24 and has a statutory role in scrutinising the Annual Report and the proposed budget and precept. The Panel also holds 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 receives regular training to assist them in undertaking their role. In line with best practice, an internal annual self-assessment was carried out in June 2023 for ETAP and found that there were no areas where concerns were raised regarding the 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 monitors these recommendations for completion. Also conducted by ETAP is the monitoring of Strategic Risk arrangements and 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.

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 organisation's improvement plans. Actions taken against the audit recommendations are reported to the ETAP Public Meeting.

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 organisations by:

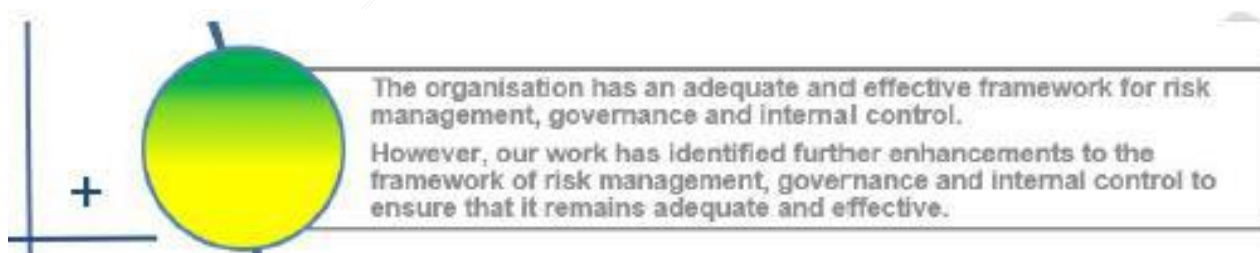
- Championing best practice in governance, objectively assessing the adequacy of governance and management of existing risks, commenting on responses to emerging risks and proposed developments;
- Providing an objective and evidence-based opinion on all aspects of governance, risk management and internal 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 2023/24 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 2023) concludes that for the 12 months ending 31 March 2024, the **DRAFT** audit opinion for the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office is as follows:

The opinion

For the 12 months ended 31 March 2024, 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:

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

- An audit opinion on whether the financial statements of the SCO give 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;
- 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.

The accounts for the financial year 21/22 have now been formally signed off by our external auditors EY LLP.

The accounts for the financial year 22/23 are still only published in draft format as they have not been completed by EY LLP. This is due to the planned phased approach to delivering the 2022/23 audits in light of a variety of complex factors contributing to audit delays nationally in previous years. It is likely that nationally there will be an agreed narrative for accounts in this position but this is yet to be agreed.

The financial accounts for the year ending March 2024 will be published in draft form by the end of May 2024, within the required deadline. It is unlikely however that these will be formally signed off by the new external auditors, Azets, due to the delay with EY LLP and the previous year's statements.

4. Overall Level of Assurance

Actions taken against the 2022/23 AGS recommendations, as reported in this AGS, have strengthened and enhanced the governance arrangements for the SCO.

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 SC's 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 2023/24)

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

The details given within this statement represent a realistic view of the governance arrangements that are in place for the SCO and that for 2023/24 there is recognition that whilst there is strong evidence of sustained good practice, there is also a need for continuous improvement to strengthen arrangements, to ensure that the organisation achieves its intended outcomes whilst acting in the public interest at all times. Actions to be taken by the SCO in 2024/25 are therefore identified below:

Issue 01

The election for PFCC took place on 2 May 2024. 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.

Recommendation:

The SCO is to develop and deliver a full induction package inclusive of a plan for the first 100 days in office of any new PFCC, ensuring that the new PFCC and any deputies are assisted in maintaining continuity, whilst also having the ability to bring their own strategic intent to the fore.




Issue 02

The election for PFCC took place on 2 May 2024. The role undertaken by the individual has statutory responsibilities relating to two public services in Staffordshire and setting their strategic direction through production of both a Police & Crime and Fire & Rescue Plan.

Recommendation:

The SCO will support the PFCC to develop and publish within legal timeframes both a Police & Crime and Fire & Rescue Plan.

The issues identified above and the planned action in 2024/25 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	Katharine Ross Director of Finance (S151) Staffordshire Commissioners Office

AGS Action Plan: 2022/2023

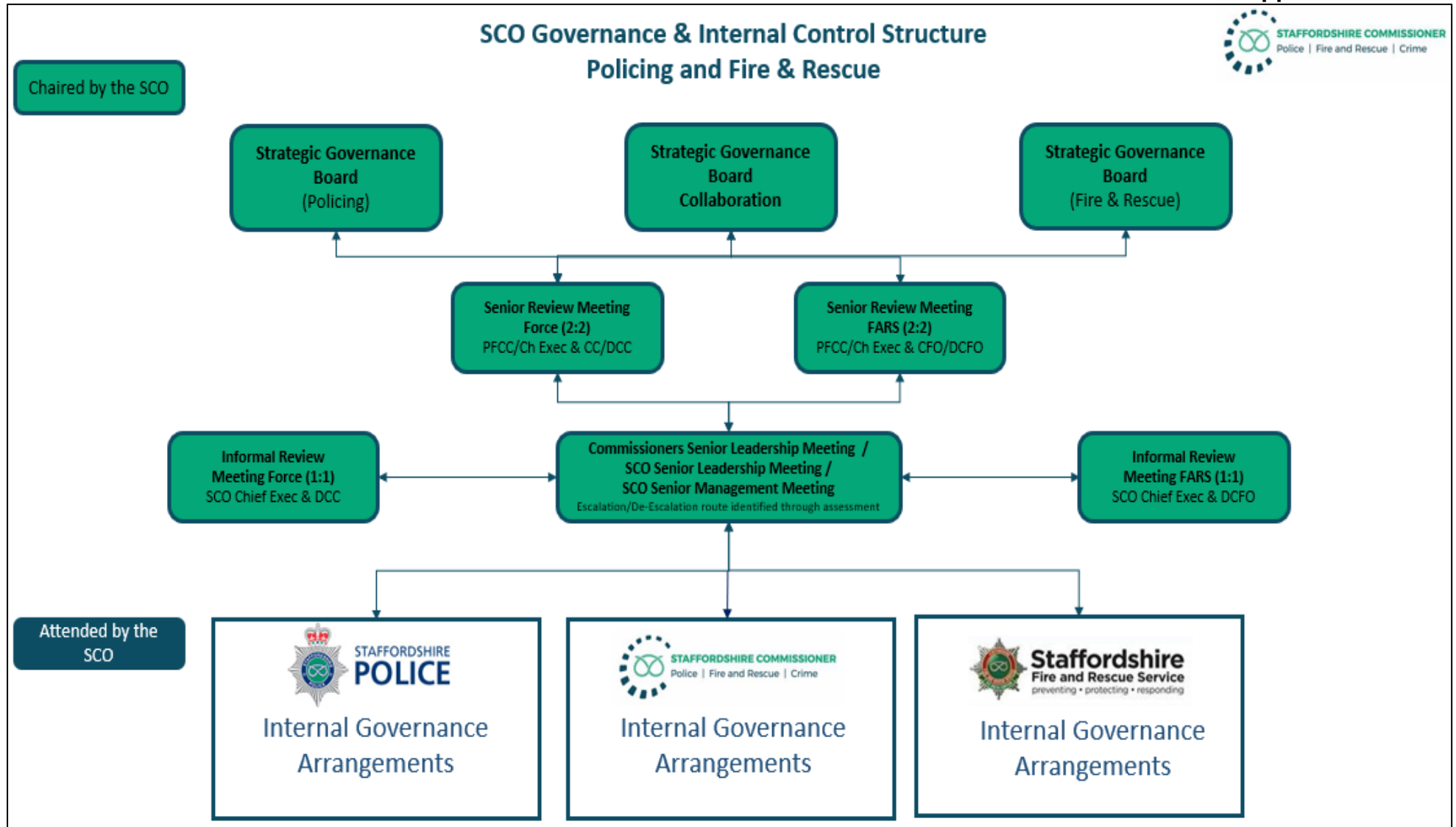
Ref No	Issue	Action	Update given on Page
1	Taking the learning from the first two Public Perception Surveys and to enhance stakeholder engagement, a procurement exercise will be carried out to contract a provider to deliver ongoing support in conducting quarterly surveys over the next two years, together with ad hoc surveys and other consultation.	The SCO will work with the Force and FARS to develop an overarching community engagement strategy to drive a consistent and cohesive approach and avoid duplication of initiatives between the three organisations.	10
2	Following the decision in September 2022 to proceed to the procurement stage for the construction of a new armed Police training facility, a decision will be taken whether to go ahead with the project. Should it do so, this will be the largest capital estates project undertaken for some time which will greatly improve the effectiveness of armed Policing and other operational support teams. Being located at Police Headquarters, it may also be the catalyst for further projects to share accommodation between Police and FARS, enabling further rationalisation of the estate.	The SCO will support the implementation of further joint Police and Fire stations in a number of locations across Staffordshire during 2023/24. These will be secondary bases in smaller towns where buildings will be shared by neighbourhood policing constables, PCSOs and retained firefighter crews	13
3	Following feedback from staff, the SCO has been working on a new staff handbook for the SCO, bringing together induction materials, staff conditions of service, guidance on working practices and other useful information.	The SCO will build on the work so far and this handbook is to be accompanied by a new approach to Personal Development Reviews to ensure clear accountability for delivering SCO plans and identification of training and development needs of staff. A new staffing structure is also to be implemented to ensure the SCO has the right mix of skills and	7

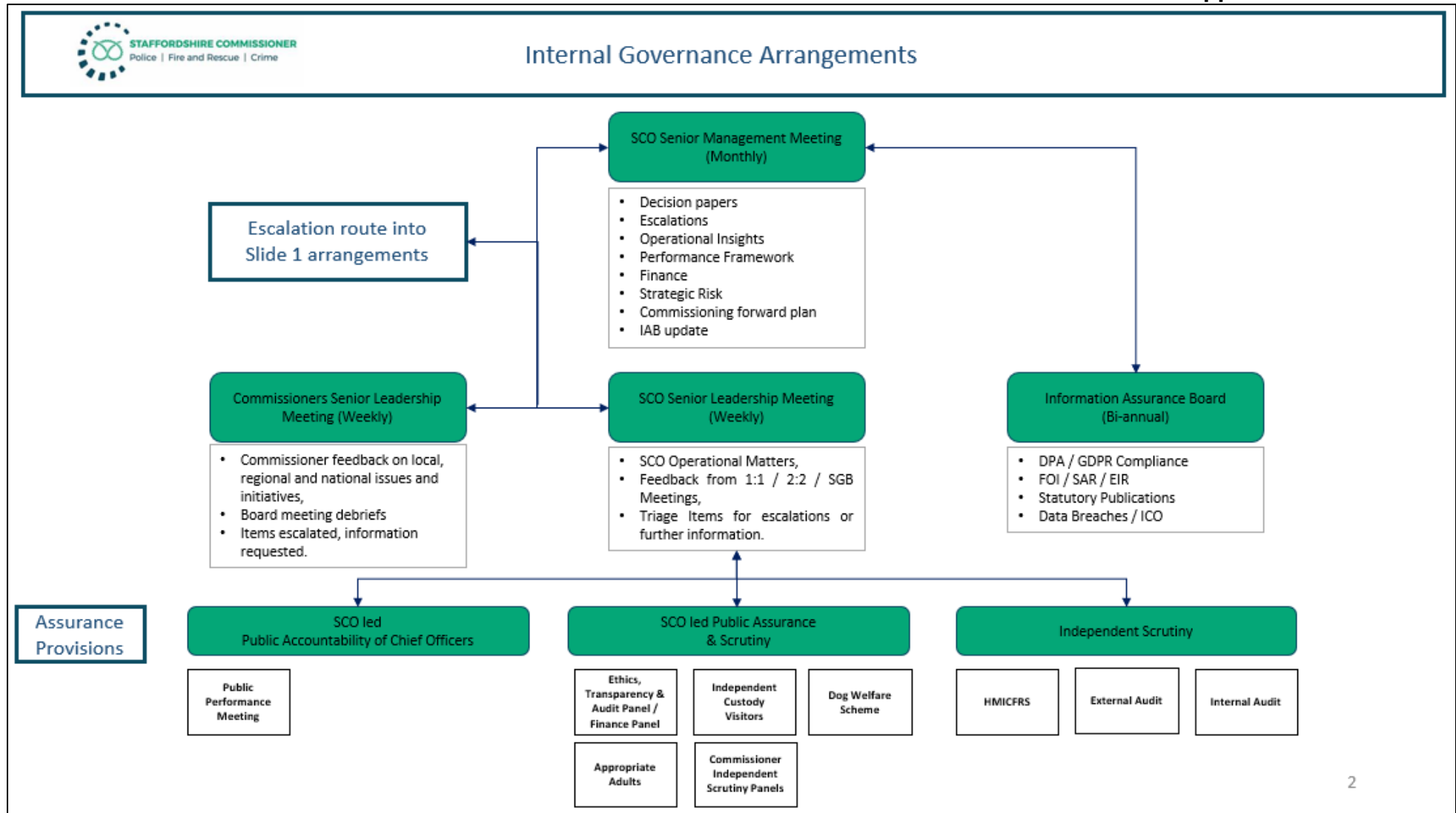
Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

		capacity to deliver programmes and manage business as usual effectively.	
4.	Whilst Staffordshire Police remains in the 'Engage' stage following HMICFRS inspections, to augment the standard governance arrangements the SC and the SCO carries out additional assurance measures.	<p>That the SCO continues with the below additional measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active monitoring of areas for improvement and performance-related information and additional performance briefings; • The Chief Executive will attend monthly meetings to oversee progress with the HMICFRS Liaison Officer; • The Chief Executive will meet weekly with the DCC with HMICFRS as a standing agenda item; • The Chief Executive will meet weekly with the CC and his Deputy with HMICFRS as a standing agenda item; • The SC will hold informal meetings with HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams; • The SC and Chief Executive will meet regularly with the HMICFRS Liaison officer. 	14
5.	With the release of the Baroness Casey Review Final Report March 2023, the need for strong and effective public oversight and governance for policing across the whole of the UK has never been greater.	The SCO notes the content and recommendations made within the report and considers these when gathering information and assurances for the PFCC to assist in holding the CC to account.	16



SCO Governance & Internal Control Structure Policing and Fire & Rescue





AGS Action Plan: 2023/2024

Ref No	Issue	Action
1	The election for PFCC took place on 2 May 2024. 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.	The SCO is to develop and deliver a full induction package inclusive of a plan for the first 100 days in office of any new PFCC, ensuring that the new PFCC and any deputies are assisted in maintaining continuity, whilst also having the ability to bring their own strategic intent to the fore.
2	The election for PFCC took place on 2 May 2024. The role undertaken by the individual has statutory responsibilities relating to two public services in Staffordshire and setting their strategic direction through production of both a Police & Crime and Fire & Rescue Plan.	The SCO will support the SC to develop and publish within legal timeframes both a Police & Crime and Fire & Rescue Plan.