



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Chief Constable

Annual Governance Statement

2021/22

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Foreword

In December 2021, I started in my role as the new Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police and this is the first Annual Governance Statement (AGS) I have undertaken in Staffordshire.



The period covered in the AGS has been a time of significant change organisationally and operationally; this has included work to develop and implement a new operating model and the commencement of the process to develop Staffordshire's next policing plan, which will be key to delivering on the Commissioner's new Police and Crime Plan priorities, this work will continue into 2022/23. During 2021/22 we have also revised the force's governance arrangements with support from external experts.

The last 24 months have been challenging for policing generally and there is no doubt there are many emerging and indeed unseen challenges the force will have to face. The challenges of Covid have not ended and the force are yet to see the long-term impact on our families, economies and communities.

This AGS therefore looks to offer a coherent and transparent review of the effectiveness of our governance arrangements over the last year. It links closely with the force's annual management statement, internal and external review and scrutiny findings and force's ambition for the forthcoming year and beyond. Our current force assessments and plans are therefore reflective of the challenges and concerns identified during 2021/22. I am encouraged that the force is already seeing signs of progress in the areas where this is most needed, however, there is much more work to be done and this will continue at pace over the forthcoming year.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Chief Constable has an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that appropriateness of all actions can be demonstrated and mechanisms are in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

In discharging this overall responsibility the Chief Constable is required to put in place proper arrangements for governance and risk management of the force's affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions.

The Chief Constable has adopted a governance framework, which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and Police' 2016. The framework outlines seven principles (as set out below) of good governance and aligns to the wider public sector Nolan principles of good governance:

1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law (integrity)
2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
3. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
4. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
5. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
6. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
7. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The seven areas have been used to form the basis of the following review of the effectiveness of the force's governance arrangements.

A copy of the governance framework can be accessed via the force website www.staffordshire.police.uk

Disclosure Note:

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

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 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.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

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

The force has 3 statutory officers, these being: the Chief Constable (CC), Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) and a Chief Finance Officer, Section 151 Officer (S151 of the Local Government Finance Act 1972).

- The Chief Constable is responsible for maintaining the Queen's Peace, and has direction and control over the force's officers and staff. The Chief Constable holds office under the Crown, but is appointed by the Staffordshire Commissioner (SC). The Chief Constable is accountable to the law for the exercise of police powers, and to the SC for the delivery of efficient and effective policing, management of resources and expenditure by the police force. At all times the Chief Constable, his officers and staff, remain operationally independent in the service of the communities that they serve.
- The Deputy Chief Constable is a statutory post to act on behalf of the Chief Constable in his absence, thus ensuring there is a senior executive officer available at all times to exercise the post of Chief Constable.
- The Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) is appointed under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 which requires every local authority to appoint a suitably qualified officer responsible for the proper administration of its affairs. The S151 Officer has statutory powers of intervention under S114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The arrival of a new Chief Constable has provided a timely opportunity to review the force's vision, values and delivery plans to refresh and recalibrate the tone and culture of the force underpinned by the launch of a new policing plan.

The policing plan will set out clearly where the force wants to be over the next 12 to 18 months recognising that there is much to do to achieve this ambition. Detailed delivery plans will build on work to date to strive to create a safe and confident Staffordshire, secured by an outstanding local police service that is passionate about serving the public, caring for its people and working in partnership.

Staff remain very aware around the focus and importance of the standards expected of them as set out in the national Code of Ethics (introduced nationally across the service in July 2014) which is built on the Nolan principles of public life.

Staff are appropriately trained to make ethical operational decisions within the framework of Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement (THRIVE). The National

Decision Making Model (NDM) was also introduced across the service in 2013 which assists in making dynamic ethical decisions around a given situation or as a situation progresses. The force's Professional Standards Department (PSD) monitors standards and compliance and consists of three areas:

1. Professional Standards which primarily deals with complaints from the public, misconduct and Death or Serious Injury Incidents (DSI's).
2. Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) which deals with corruption threats and prevention in line with the annual strategic assessment and identified priorities.
3. Force Vetting Unit which operates in line with the vetting code of practice.

PSD reports directly to the Deputy Chief Constable with Professional Standards and Force Vetting being co-located with Human Resources (HR) to provide a joined up approach to the management of people. ACU is located separately to maintain the integrity of any covert investigations. The department works across the force with all roles and ranks, actively engaging in order to highlight themes of concern, deliver interventions and reaffirm the values of the organisation aligned to the Modern Policing Strategy.

The force actively examines information and intelligence from a broad range of sources, analysing the data, developing and testing the intelligence and utilising best practice to ensure resources are directed effectively. The focus is to problem solve early in collaboration with partners and where necessary to identify staff who may be at risk of wrongdoing or vulnerable to corruption and ensure appropriate interventions are put in place.

The Professional Standards area of business runs a triage process to ensure the very earliest assessment, appropriate management and swift resolution for all dissatisfaction.

The ACU team has successfully identified and brought proceedings against officers and staff during 2021/22 where their behaviour has fallen below the standards that are expected of them. Counter-fraud arrangements are also periodically independently reviewed by the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel (ETAP).

The force uses the National Crime Agency (NCA) threat assessment, supported by regular regional threat assessments to focus the forces resources around the three key identified areas; information management; abuse of powers or police authority; and inappropriate associations. The recent murder of Sarah Everard concentrated force efforts in tackling sexual misconduct, Abuse of Position for Sexual Purpose (APSP) and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) whereby the established sexual misconduct working group was absorbed into the strategic VAWG priorities. PSD has developed and rolled out the Know the Line Campaign training to improve knowledge and understanding of sexual misconduct and APSP. Subsequently, 2021 saw a 71% increase in the internal reporting of sexual misconduct into PSD.

The PSD's monthly tasking process chaired by the DCC and attended by key stakeholders provides an opportunity to identify harm reduction strategies and to develop preventive or proactive methods to identify and investigate corrupt practice.

The force has a whistleblowing policy which is supported by a whistle blowing system (Bad Apple). The force has an effective, ongoing dialogue with the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) who also have a confidential hotline.

During 2021/22, the department has seen an uplift in staffing and has restructured to provide a more dedicated triage function for complaints, introducing a prevent and intervention officer as well as increasing in detectives to effectively manage complex investigations within both ACU and PSD. The relationship with the compliance manager for complaints remains strong and forms the basis of an organisational learning platform with relevant governance and ownership. These developments continue to strive towards delivering the best service to the communities of Staffordshire.

The force experienced an initial increase in complaints around the perception of over and under policing of the government's Covid-19 guidance. This balance in reporting has given some confidence that the force has been maintaining a proportionate response to the challenges faced. Specific themes have been fed back into the policing response to Covid-19 in order to minimise the reports of dissatisfaction.

The force's approach to misconduct cases is one of transparency. Regular updates are provided across the force from the Chief Constable via "news from the executive" to demonstrate the nature and outcomes of upheld misconduct cases.

The force requires that all gifts and gratuities are recorded for transparency, even where declined. There is an online system for recording this activity. This is regularly reported to ETAP for transparency and scrutiny. Executive officers expenses are available publicly and are also reviewed by ETAP. PSD and payroll undertake regular dip samples of expenses and other systems. Any agreed secondary employment is recorded and a process for authorisation of new business interests is in place.

Support around legal matters is provided to the Chief Constable through the Head of Legal Services. The Head of Legal Service's role is delivered through a contract with West Midlands Police and is a joint legal service between the two forces.

The force has direct links to the College of Policing and reviews all Authorised Professional Practice in the context of its own policies and procedures. All policies and procedures are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and are reviewed in the context of the Code of Ethics. New or significantly revised policies and procedures are signed off at Executive Officer level. There is a dedicated Policy Review and Development Team for the area of Public Protection which ensures that all local and national lessons learned and recommendations around serious case and safeguarding reviews for both adults and children are used to enhance service provision to those most vulnerable in our communities.

The annual programme of inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) recommenced fully during the early part of 2021 following a pause during the height of the pandemic. Staffordshire began a period of continuous assessment as part of the Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) inspection process during May 2021, which is due to report fully in August 2022. Early feedback has

not identified any significant issues in respect of integrity and values but the force awaits the final report later in the year and will respond accordingly to any areas for improvement.

Going forward HMICFRS intend to undertake a more thematic / national approach around reviewing vetting and counter corruption. Any previous outstanding recommendations in this area have now all been delivered against and the force uses national themes and recommendations to ensure continuous improvements.

Internal and external audit also to gives assurance or the opportunity to raise issues to ensure that laws, regulations, policy and expenditure are complied with lawfully, more detail around results is given later in the document. The forces approach to internal audit has moved from a focus on financial areas only to now include other business areas where issues have been identified, this provides an independent perspective on improvement activity.

2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

The Code of Ethics is embedded across the force and is a key strand in training and policy development. The Chief Constable makes clear expectations of standards of behaviour in line with the code. The Code requires all officers and staff to act with openness, fairness and respect. The standards within the code are accessible to staff and the public alike. In executing the Code, the Chief Constable sets out clearly the message that staff and officers are here to provide confidence to communities and to keep them safe protecting those who are most vulnerable.

Staffordshire Police publishes a number of key documents in line with the force publication scheme, this includes Executive Officer expenses, responses to inspection activity, and minutes from strategic level meetings.

The public can report crime and incidents online and seek advice and guidance on the force website and other social media channels e.g. Facebook Messenger and Twitter, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The move to online services and digital channels has delivered on the public's preference for more online interactions and greater digital services.

The force endeavours to respond to all Freedom of Information requests in the required time frame. This ensures that the public are able to access the information that the legislation entitles them to.

The force conducts specific consultation with victims of crime and anti-social behaviour and the Commissioner has recently set up Independent Scrutiny Panels (CISPs) to focus review around specific areas of use of police powers e.g. stop and search and use of force.

The new policing plan will set out a renewed focus on improving engagement with the service and this will form part of a renewed performance framework to measure success. Early feedback from the PEEL continuous assessment process has identified that the force needs to enhance the level and methods of engagement with its communities and better

demonstrate it has acted on feedback. In recognising this, the force has undertaken peer review work with a leading force and is revising its engagement strategy, this will be an key area of focus for the year ahead.

The implementation of Niche RMS has delivered an opportunity to record community engagement and community priorities in a different way. However, the force still needs to maximise the benefits that this can bring to provide greater insight and understanding around what matters to communities.

Ongoing Action: The force will enhance its engagement activity to develop greater insight and understanding around what matters to communities building this in to planning for the future

The force continues to work closely with communities through active citizenship, for example through Speed Watch, Neighbourhood Watch and Staffordshire Smart Alert.

Further development of the Police Support Volunteers scheme will be undertaken during 2022/23 to ensure continued opportunities for members of the public to be involved in policing their local communities. The force recognises the important contribution that is made by those who volunteer for example, as part of the Special Constabulary. The force Cadet programme also welcomes young people from across the force area to support their communities and develop their skills.

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

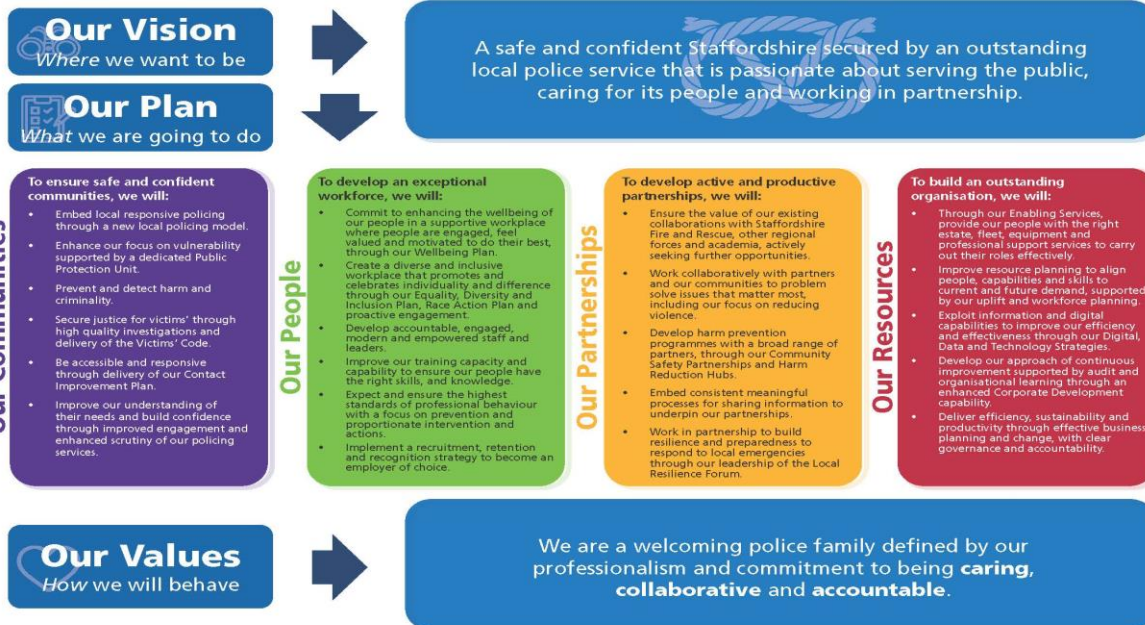
During the later part of 2021/22 and under the lead and direction of the new Chief Constable, the force has drafted a new policing plan and supporting performance framework. This plan clearly sets out how the force will operate to achieve where it wants to be. The detail has been predicated on a force wide consultation exercise led by all senior leaders to ensure maximum engagement from staff both face to face and virtually. The plan will also be shared externally with communities and other key stakeholders as part of the longer-term process. The plan will support the Commissioner's broader Police and Crime plan 2021–2024 which sets out priorities around; a flexible and responsive service, supporting victims and witnesses, preventing harm and protecting people, reducing offending and reoffending, and a more effective criminal justice system. The Chief Constable is held to account by the Staffordshire Commissioner against the delivery of the policing plan.

The policing plan has 4 delivery pillars as set out below. Each pillar is owned at chief officer level with a comprehensive and clear performance framework under development as a key component of how we will measure and monitor that we are delivering the intended outcomes for Staffordshire.



Our Plan on a Page

2022/23



A significant change programme has been prepared during 2021/22 with implementation of phase 1 set for June 2022. This will focus on a new local policing model to ensure that response and neighbourhood officers work more closely on preventative approaches. Other benefits of the model will be quicker response times, enhanced local knowledge to solve problems and more time to investigate crime to provide a high quality service to victims.

Areas of operational focus are identified through a process of strategic risk assessment. Delivery and outcomes against these areas are overseen via a strategic tasking and monitoring process led at ACC level. This is an annual process and the strategic priorities for 2022/23 have also now been set which will set the future control strategy for the force against those areas identified with the highest threat and risk. These consider and reflect national priorities for example violence against women and girls.

The force has a sound annual business planning cycle in place which is underpinned by an annually updated force management statement (FMS). This assessment provides a longer-term 4 year forecast around demand and resources and is informed by horizon scanning to anticipate trends and environmental factors that may influence current planning thinking. This statement has been refreshed during 2021/22 and has been used as part of the analysis to determine the required changes planned around the local policing model. The current FMS will be used to inform the investment and savings areas for 22/23 and beyond and is a key tool and piece of analysis for the strategic planning approach of the force.

During 2021/22 the force has recognised that a number of elements that support an effective corporate function now need to be rebuilt to support benefits tracking and complement the programme of change effectively.

NEW Action: The development of Corporate Function will be a priority for 2022/23 to ensure maximum linkage across strategic planning cycle, delivery of change and development of comprehensive performance and benefits monitoring.

The force has maintained a balanced budget for 201/22 which is underpinned by a comprehensive Medium Term Financial Strategy. Significant investment in priority areas have been identified supported by the FMS process and in line with the cross cutting themes identified both internally and externally. This will see more resources invested in the force contact centre, technology service, crime validation and corporate services. Key capital investments are linked to national programmes of work such as the Emergency Service Network (officer radios and communications channels) overhaul, enhanced laptop and device roll, control room upgrades, fleet and a replacement resource planning capability.

ETAP generally, and its finance sub panel specifically provide regular monitoring of the forces financial position and forecasts. The latest Finance Panel (FP) report sets out a healthy position at the year end.

The force continues to hold directorate leads to account for the delivery of services within their delegated budget. Finance Business Partners are aligned to directorates to give support and advice to management teams on the use of financial resource aligned to outcomes, as well as to provide a link back to the force corporate centre. Going forward governance will be aligned to the new 'command' structures including the new local policing command.

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

A governance framework should comprise of the systems and processes, culture and values by which the force is directed and controlled and its activities, through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. This in turn should enable the Chief Constable to monitor the achievements against the forces strategic objectives and to consider whether those priorities have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

As the force prepares to launch the new local policing model it is also reviewing and overlaying all of its analysis to ensure that the force has the ability to prioritise future investment in both people and other assets. Phase 2 of the change programme will focus on the control room and public protection in line with the current known risks. However, in order to be more forward looking in terms of workforce planning (capability and capacity) and asset management (estates, IT etc) the force will seek to undertake more sophisticated analysis from the FMS and other sources to identify what activity is required to meet future demands.

The force has already invested in its ability to visualise data to spend more time on understanding what it is indicating rather than time spent on producing it. The force's digital enabling programme (DEP) has already delivered on providing more real time information for Human Resource professionals and front line supervisors. The future roll out is aligned to the force's biggest threat and risk areas and the next focus will be on producing real time data around investigation quality in line with an area of concern published by HMICFRS. The entire programme of work will support more effective management and analysis of information to inform decision making at all levels which has been a gap for the force compared to others over the last few years.

Collaborative partnerships are successfully in place with other blue light services and local authorities to deliver around areas such as safeguarding, regional organised crime, counter terrorism, and motorways policing. Governance structures exist to oversee that these are providing value for money and these are subject to review via the Commissioners governance arrangements to hold the force to account for their part in effective delivery.

The force has forged further partnerships with academic establishments to help understand and develop culture and is leading the national agenda around forensics in partnership with Staffordshire University to develop upstream solutions to digital forensics which assist around safeguarding issues and increase capability and capacity. Further work has been commissioned during 2021/22 with Keele University to explore disproportionality in line with the national focus around this area and this is being used to help shape service delivery. This work is overseen via the Evidenced Based Practice and Innovation Board, which includes academic partners.

The force's Performance Board oversees how the force is delivering against its priorities and going forward this will focus and align to the new policing plan delivery. This board is serviced from a number of areas including the Integrated Inspections Board which specifically monitors progress against force and national HMICFRS recommendations and related internal evaluations and audits.

The force 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 Staffordshire Police's policies, aims and objectives, including partnership and other joint working arrangements.

However HMICFRS and the force's internal performance monitoring and auditing have indicated significant service delivery gaps during 2021/22 which have shaped and accelerated a number of significant changes informing the change to a new Local Policing Model in June 2022. The force also continues to identify work for a second phase of change for 2022/23 to continue to address challenges and issues around securing safe and confident communities.

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

The arrival of a new Chief Constable has enabled a solid foundation on which to stabilise the Chief Officer team. During 20/21 it was necessary to offer the opportunity of temporary 'acting up' roles within the Executive Team for a significant part of the year. The force recognises that this unique and temporary position resulted in a holding position period which saw a focus on setting out a series of options for a new operating model in readiness for a decision by the in-coming Chief. At this time other key leadership changes were also made including the Chief Technology Officer, again acting up arrangements were put in place to mitigate against this gap.

Once in post, the new Chief also enabled a refocus on the tone and culture of the force which has been demonstrated by comprehensive face to face engagement across the entire organisation around both the change programme and the new policing plan. Sessions have been led by Senior Leaders and Chief Officers to look to understand and address blocks to performance and what matters to staff.

In line with the renewed policing plan the key principles from the previous Modern Policing Strategy will be reworked to reflect the ambitions around our how the organisation will develop an exceptional workforce. A significant element of this will be a focus on developing engaged, modern and empowered leaders.

The force has enhanced its approach to producing an annual FMS which specifically looks at capacity to support the strategic planning cycle. Workforce planning is a critical part of this cycle in identifying skills gaps and workforce changes. Workforce Planning and recruitment/promotion activity is underpinned by the force's turnover timeline and promotion predictions products which detail forecast officer numbers against the Target Operating Model alongside future demand activity predictions and demand profiling. Police Officers are being recruited through the new entry routes for recruits which has significantly changed the employment model and has required extensive workforce planning and recruitment activity to ensure successful implementation. During 2021/22 an Ofsted inspection of Staffordshire University (partners with Staffordshire Police and other regional forces to deliver police constable degree apprenticeship course) was graded good in terms of overall effectiveness. However, this has meant that the force now has a relatively young workforce with less experience than in previous years.



Training plans and investment in tutoring arrangements are in place, however there has been significant pressure and challenge to deliver against complex and competing demands. The FMS and other prioritisation methods are being utilised to address gaps and respond to early feedback from HMICFRS around managing demand and workload pressures to create

more capacity to do a good job. This is a key intended benefit of the programme of change along with supporting supervisory roles to oversee and support more effectively.

The force has developed its data visualisation ability to offer real-time data and information to assist with day to day management. Human resources information is now available in this format to assist with day to day and longer terms capability and capacity planning.

There is a clear scheme of delegation in place and the force has, during the latter part of the year, engaged with experts in the field around enhancing the forces governance structure and meetings.

Executive Officers at Assistant Chief Constable level and above must successfully complete a national standard of Strategic Command. Business heads for HR, Finance and Legal services are all professionally trained and qualified.

Where appropriate, the force has standard operating procedures and information sharing agreements to enhance partnership working especially in order to identify vulnerability, this has been key to delivering safeguarding throughout periods of lockdown. The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub is a good example where together with other agencies, the force is jointly located and sharing information effectively to enhance capacity and capability. Partnerships with external providers such Kier have governance arrangements in place to ensure effective decision making and clarity of roles and responsibilities.

The delivery of the policing plan and the continued enhancement and embedding of the FMS will drive further improvements around understanding and developing the forces capacity and capability for 2022/23.

NEW Action: The force will develop its workforce planning process to build sustained capability and capacity across the organisation.

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

Since February 2022 all key strategic decisions are made at the newly created Executive Management Board (see section 7 for more detail). There is also a weekly force Chief Officer Team Meeting where socialisation of issues and direction setting takes place. By exception, this meeting can also review matters requiring expedited decision making outside of the governance cycle, where this is necessary relevant key post holders must be present such as the section 151 officer. Directorate level Boards are held monthly which provide oversight and appropriate decision making at the appropriate threshold. Matters which exceed this threshold are escalated to the strategy level boards along with any matters by exception. The force is currently working to enhance clarity of decision making routes and refresh decision making thresholds to reflect the new operating model and address some of the gaps and issues identified from the governance consultancy work which commenced at the end of 2021.

The force holds a monthly strategic Performance Board chaired by the DCC. Under the direction of this board, the force is developing the performance framework to underpin the new policing plan to include more real-time and self-serve data in line with key priorities.

The force manages risk in a variety of ways to ensure that both operational and business risks are identified, controlled / mitigated and managed as appropriate and in accordance with force policy. The following measures continue to be been undertaken to ensure effectiveness in this area:

- Monthly Executive Management Board chaired by the Chief Constable
- Individual risk registers for each directorate and department as well as specific registers for projects such as the records management system implementation
- Regular internal audit reports around risk management
- The Section 151 Officer ensuring the propriety and legality of financial transactions
- Financial regulations and contract standing orders supported by appropriately qualified finance and procurement staff
- Professionally qualified staff and business area leads in all key areas across the organisation
- HR procedures supporting terms and conditions of employment for staff supported by qualified HR specialists
- Reporting mechanisms and trained staff reviewing and taking action to address Health and Safety risks
- Risks from complaints and internal conduct issues investigated by the PSD or the ACU and appropriate action taken
- External audit arrangements

How the force identifies and manages risk is regularly monitored by the SCO along with external insurers and internal auditors upon their request for additional assurances. Additionally ETAP have an identified 'risk champion' to work closely with the force as required.

Risk is a standing agenda item for the Strategic Governance Board (SGB) which is held monthly and has all force and SCO executive level officers and staff in attendance.

The forces risk processes and tools will be reviewed and refreshed during 2022/23 to ensure alignment to the new policing plan and force structure.

Along with the Performance Board, force performance and outcomes are scrutinised at a quarterly public performance meeting, chaired by the SC to hold the Chief Constable to account. There are a series of annual thematic inquiry sessions where the SCO also scrutinises the force's performance.

The force has introduced a Chief Officer led monthly Integrated Inspections Board (IIB) which focuses on inspection and scrutiny activity and organisational learning to drive improvements.

There is a programme of force conducted internal reviews which cover a wide range of operational areas to ensure recommendations, especially from HMICFRS and Internal Audit are being progressed and service provision enhanced. The annual programme is formulated on a risk based assessment of where additional force scrutiny would provide best value. Much activity during the year has been based on the HMICFRS PEEL framework and National Child Protection Inspection (NCPI) Framework. This process has identified gaps in year which have also been formally articulated to force by HMICFRS via the forces NCPI report (April 2022) and two accelerated causes of concern around call handling and investigation quality (March 2022). The force already had plans in place to address these areas, however these have now been accelerated and are currently being overseen with engagement and support from HMICFRS. The intended benefits of the change in the operating model will also address a significant amount of these fundamental areas which were identified as challenges and issues during the scoping of the work during the later months of 2021. Additional capacity has also been placed in the force's ability to conduct real time quality reviews and this function will be formally built in as part of the development of a corporate services function for 2022.

NEW Action: The force will invest in its scrutiny and audit capability and capacity in order to monitor and support sustained improvement activity.

Strategic level partnership meetings with Local Authorities, Health and other blue light services form part of the wider governance arrangements and set the direction for broader County and City-wide issues.

The SC and CC work with other Commissioners and CCs on a regional basis (the West Midlands region – Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Mercia and West Midlands). The SC chairs the regional collaboration group and oversees with colleagues the performance of regional and national collaborations between police forces; these include the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), the Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG), the National Police Air Service (NPAS) and the regional Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU). Regional work is a key aspect of the overall force delivery arrangement and is one that is growing given Government investment into regional activity and the expectation that local forces will transfer some activity, where appropriate, into a regional collaboration. Force leads on specific collaborations are required to bring performance and financial reports to each quarterly Regional Board meeting and the SC scrutinise and hold to account both those leads and Chief Constables for the activity and outcomes achieved.

The Deputy Chief Constable is the named officer responsible for data quality. The force recognises that data quality has been an issue for some time and is investing in its crime validation capability to seek to address this. The force seeks reassurance via its information assurance arrangements and Information Assurance and Assets Board that data is being used and shared appropriately and in line with data protection and information assurance requirements. In the event of any potential data breaches, the force has a record of early self-referral to the Information Commissioners Office for independent review and to ensure openness and transparency.

The financial performance of the force and SCO is monitored through monthly budget out turn reports and refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Any variances or longer term gaps identified are reported to the Executive Management Board. Financial control arrangements allow implications on budgets and value for money to be understood and corrective plans put in place where appropriate to either maximise or minimise the financial impact. There has been a clear focus to ensure that budget information is

A Good and Balanced Budget

A **Balanced Budget** means that:

- Income equals expenditure
- Cost reduction targets and investment proposals are credible and achievable, and;
- Key assumptions are 'stress tested'



A **Good Budget** means that:

- It has a medium term focus, supporting the Policing Plan
- Resources are focused on our priority outcomes
- It is not driven by short term fixes
- It demonstrates how we have listened to our communities through consultation
- It is transparent and well scrutinised
- It is integrated with the capital programme; and
- It maintains financial stability

developed to inform at various levels of the organisation to support accountability in budget management and the demonstration of value for money decision making at that level. The force has a balanced budget for 2021/22 and internal auditors have again given an opinion of 'substantial assurance' around the key financial controls for the force.

The organisation's financial governance and management arrangements are all based on the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice for the Police Service of England and Wales as presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 39A(5) of the Police Act 1996 and Section 17(6) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. This identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Chief Constable and the Chief Constable's Chief Finance Officer separately from those of the Staffordshire Commissioner and the Commissioners Chief Finance Officer. The Code is based on a series of principles supported by specific standards and statements of practice which are considered necessary to provide a strong foundation to:

- Financially manage the short, medium and long term finances of the force;
- Manage financial resilience to meet foreseen demands on services; and
- Financially manage unexpected shocks in their financial circumstances.

The force will continue to further align itself with the Home Office Financial Code of Management and the relevant CIPFA codes of practice. The FMCP is issued under section 17 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, which permits the Secretary of State to issue codes of practice to all Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Chief Constables. As set out in section 17(4) of the 2011 Act, PCCs and Chief Constables must have regard to this code in carrying out their functions

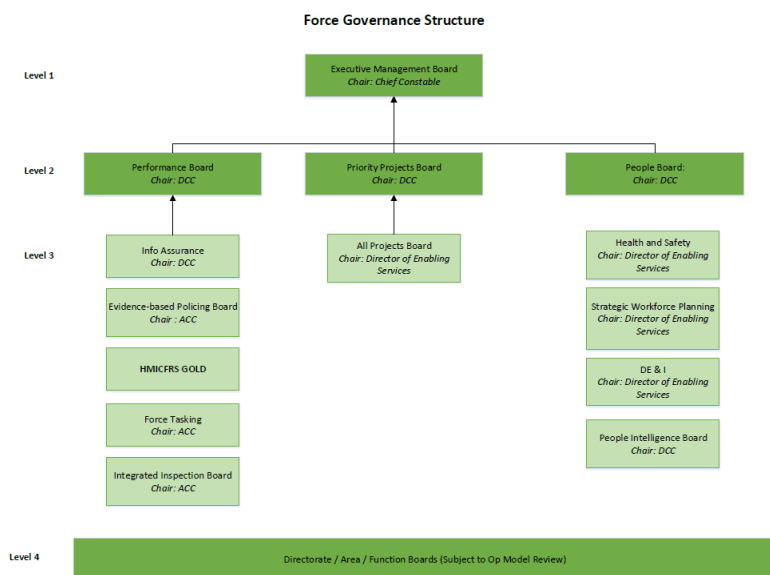
In collaboration with the SCO the force reviews the Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation to ensure the organisation remains up to date with its strategic financial control environment. These are reviewed on an annual basis and approved via the Strategic Governance Board.

During 2021/22 the ETAP Police Finance Panel have closely monitored the force's position which reports back into the full ETAP. Various recommendations have been made which the force has noted and addressed, overall the assessment has been positive.

The force has a responsibility for the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework including the system of internal control. This process is ongoing and has resulted in work with consultants during 21/22 to review arrangements (see section 7 for more details).

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

During 2021/22 a review of decision making and assurance arrangements across the force has been undertaken, in conjunction with consultants recognised to be leading experts in this field. The review focused on the effectiveness of top-level governance meetings and made numerous recommendations for improvement. The current framework is shown below:



NEW Action: Further review of the force’s governance structure and mechanisms will ensure clear alignment to the new policing plan in terms of monitoring, reporting and accountability.

The Chief Constable is held to account by the SC formally via a number of scrutiny meetings including confidential inquiry sessions, public quarterly performance meetings, and the performance assurance board. The Chief Finance Officer also meets regularly with the Director of Finance for the SCO.

The force has a robust action planning system that tracks the implementation of external recommendations including internal audit and HMICFRS. This online tool is accessible to all managers across the force and is administered by the Governance Team. Reporting against status and progress is via the IIB to hold those charged with delivery to account.

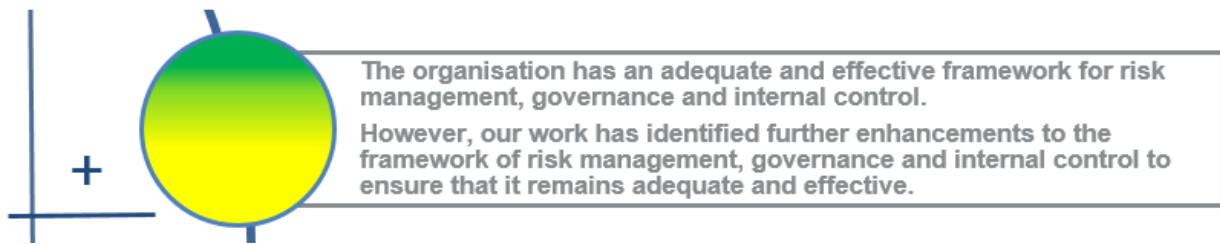
ETAP regularly review progress made against external recommendations and this forms part of the Chief Constable's Governance report tabled bi annually.

The force has an embedded process for environmental scanning to ensure Chief Officers are kept informed of a broad range of national issues that may affect policing. The Chief Constable attends the quarterly National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) meeting to ensure a co-ordinated approach to policing beyond the force and the region. Any national changes or consultations from the NPCC are monitored and actioned via the daily scanning process over seen as part of a weekly Force Executive Meeting.

The role of internal audit is provided to the force via a contracted arrangement, for 2021/22 this has remained as RSM (UK Group LLP). The Head of Internal Audit ensures that there is a strategy and plan developed on the basis of risk with appropriate levels of involvement from the force and the SCO. For 2021/22 the audit opinions have shown a mixed picture. Ten audits of the control environment were undertaken that resulted in formal assurance opinions. Of these ten reviews, seven reports concluded that 'substantial' assurance could be taken; two reports concluded that 'partial' assurance could be taken and one report concluded that 'minimal' assurance could be taken. Significant progress has been made against all areas where minimal or partial assurance has been given with oversight from the S151 for areas falling under the enabling element of the business (IT strategy and Plan & Expenses) and oversight at ACC level for matters that are linked to operational areas (Firearms, Tasers and Ammunition Storage and Destruction). An assessment of the progress was also made in the implementation of the original management actions from the minimal assurance review and concluded that some significant progress had been made in addressing the original management actions. Two further advisory reviews were undertaken where an assurance opinion was not provided. Significant weaknesses were identified in the Crime Recording review which the force is addressing following further review with investment around capability and capacity in crime validation processes and practices, this will be fully implemented during the early part of 2022.

Within the original approved audit plan there was an allocation for Asset and Fleet Management which were requested by the force to be deferred until 2022/23 due to related management changes. However, further in force review work continued to be undertaken.

Overall the Annual Internal Audit Report concludes that overall for the 12 months ended 31 March 2022, the head of internal audit opinion for the Chief Constable for Staffordshire is as follows:



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. A Sub-Group of ETAP (Finance Panel) provides a particular focus on financial issues. The panel has a different chairperson than for ETAP, providing for a dual focus at different meetings.

ETAP continues to advise the SC and the CC according to good governance principles, including the monitoring of the Strategic Risk Framework, recommending for approval the AGS and the Statement of Accounts as well as putting decisions made by the SC and the force under the spotlight.

Staffordshire Police's external auditors for 2021/22, (Ernst and Young LLP), provide regular reports at ETAP. At these meetings panel members are given the opportunity to consider audit findings, challenge and ask for further clarification, and also make recommendations. However, the force still awaits sign off from the 2020/21 accounts as significant ongoing delays continue. It is therefore not possible to offer a position in relation to this for the 2020/21 or 2021/22 AGS. ETAP have formally raised this matter with EY and this remains an areas of focus for the Finance panel and ETAP and has remained as a standing agenda item for each meeting.

During 2021/22 for force received its NCPI inspection report which saw a number of recommendations for the force to address. Much work has taken place underpinned by a detailed action plan and dedicated gold and silver level lead. The force has sought continued engagement and support from the HMICFRS experts in the field to independently sense check progress and will be subject to a follow up inspection during 2022/23. Also, during the latter part of the last financial year, the force received notification from HMICFRS of 2 causes of concern around the force contact centre and quality of investigation. As described previously, the force had already identified challenges in these areas but has accelerated plans to address to create rapid improvement plans. Benefits tracking to monitor impact of the significant operating model changes are fundamental to monitor real-time and longer term solutions. The next phase of the change programme is being validated through the forces strategic planning process utilising the latest information from the FMS. The enhanced capacity around force's ability around audit and quality reviews will also be key to ensuring successful long term delivery.

The force is also working closely with HMICFRS, The College of Policing, and other forces to identify good practice and undertake peer reviews and benchmarking to assist in long term solutions as part of the forces change programme in line with the Chief's ambition, through continued learning and development, to be outstanding.

OVERALL LEVEL OF ASSURANCE

In reflecting the overall position as outlined above, including internal and external assessments of effectiveness in some key areas, the Chief Constable offers a partial level of assurance. The Chief Constable feels that further enhancements can be made in the appropriate stewardship of the use of resources by Staffordshire Police in order to serve the public interest and to adhere to legislation and policy, and ethical values and respect of the law. However, within this overall assessment, the force is able to offer a strong level of assurance around the financial management of public money.

This opinion is given to offer a fair and balanced assessment of the challenges identified during 2021/22. In doing so the force also makes clear the level of activity undertaken during this period and the work that remains in train to mitigate against the key challenges. Assurance is given that for 2022/23 all matters will be appropriately monitored and subject to sustained and enhanced scrutiny.

ACTIONS

Update against 2020/21 actions

Action 1: The force will enhance its engagement activity to develop greater insight and understanding around what matters to communities building this in to planning for the future

Update: Community engagement activity has continued during 2021/22 however the operating model during this period has abstracted neighbourhood activity in order to respond to incidents. This has meant that the force has not fully delivered against this action and will continue to pursue full delivery as part of the benefits of the new local policing model.

Status: Ongoing for 2022/23

Action 2: Consideration will be given to any refresh of priorities from the Staffordshire Commissioner as part of the natural review process for the force's governance arrangements.

Update: The force has ensured a close alignment of arrangements to set out clearly its contribution to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. Structures and performance frameworks will be further developed as part of ongoing business utilising the benefits arising from data visualisation developments.

Status: Complete with further work to continuously improve as part of business as usual.

Action 3: Ensure the strategic planning cycle (including the FMS) underpins the force's ability to make timely and informed strategic decisions.

Update: During 2021/22 the force produced the most comprehensive annual assessment to date. This has been used as a key driver to inform strategic planning decisions and will be used for the year ahead to hold leaders to account around delivery.

Status: Complete with further work to continuously improve as part of business as usual.

Action 4: Continue to develop the current partnership framework incorporating an enhanced partnership register to identify resources balanced against benefits realised and value for money.

Update: Partnerships is a key focus for the force and a key element of the new policing plan. The change in the operating model will see enhancements to partnership working especially at the local level and work will continue to monitor and track the benefits and value these provide.

Status: Complete with further work to continuously improve as part of business as usual.

Actions for 2022/23 arising from 2021/22 AGS review of effectiveness

Action 1: The force will enhance its engagement activity to develop greater insight and understanding around what matters to communities building this in to planning for the future

Action 2: The development of Corporate Function will be a priority for 2022/23 to ensure maximum linkage across strategic planning cycle, delivery of change and development of comprehensive performance and benefits monitoring.

Action 3: The force will develop its workforce planning process to build sustained capability and capacity across the organisation.

Action 4: The force will invest in its scrutiny, quality assurance and case file audit capability and capacity in order to monitor and support sustained improvement activity.

Action 5: Further review of the force's governance structure and mechanisms will ensure clear alignment to the new policing plan in terms of monitoring, reporting and accountability.

CONCLUSION

The detail given within this statement represents a transparent account of key challenges identified during that last year during a time of significant change. A vast amount of activity is being undertaken to address short and longer-term issues including significant changes to how the force operates and investments in key areas. The force is now therefore well positioned under the leadership of the new Chief Constable and launch of the new Policing Plan to deliver the level of sustained progress required for 2022/23.

At the point of publication / pre audit opinion (June 2021) the signatories were as follows:

Signed:



Chris Noble
Chief Constable



Emma Barnett
Deputy Chief Constable



John Bloomer
Chief Constable's Section
151 Officer

Endorsement by New Deputy Chief Constable post audit opinion (January 2023):

As current Deputy Chief Constable, I acknowledge the comments by my predecessor and endorse this Annual Governance Statement.



Jon Roy
Deputy Chief Constable