



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Chief Constable

Annual Governance Statement

2022/23

Foreword

Staffordshire Police has done a lot to improve over the last year, and that is captured within this annual governance statement (AGS), but there are many challenges lying ahead, and we know improvements must still be made.

During 2022/23 we have implemented changes around developing the frontline operating model and began our investment work in public protection where we need to care for the most vulnerable victims and tackle the most dangerous offenders. Work has also focused significant improvements in our contact centre, and building the capability and capacity to deliver required change on an ongoing basis.



There have been key appointments within the Chief Officer Team which has seen two external assistant chief constables join the force, bringing with them a wealth of experience and knowledge and offering stability to the previous temporary arrangements. In addition, the force has acknowledged the need to further strengthen the span of the wider senior leadership team with investment in two key posts to oversee Corporate Development and Public Protection.

The force currently remains in the engage phase of monitoring (as referenced in the addendum / disclosure note within the 2021/22 AGS) with our inspection body. But irrespective of that, we continue to strive to be the best local police service that we can be. 2022 saw the launch of a brand-new policing plan which sets out our Values, Vision, and Focus. This links clearly to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan set by our Police Fire and Crime Commissioner. The force also has a key part to play to deliver the National Policing Vision for 2030 and contribute to the ambition for policing to be more effective and more trusted.

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. I am both proud and pleased of the hard work undertaken by everyone across the force during the last year and recognise that this has resulted in notable improvements on which we will build for the year ahead.

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

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: 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 King'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). This role 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, along with officers and staff, are to

remain operationally independent in executing their duties to the communities that they serve.

- The Deputy Chief Constable is a statutory post to act on behalf of the Chief Constable during any period of 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.

A refreshed and revised policing plan was launched in June 2022 which clearly sets out the force's vision, values and areas of focus. This was created following extensive internal consultation and engagement which also extended to partners and other stakeholders. This has underpinned a recalibration of the tone and culture of the force. 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. This has been a national focus during this period (and will continue to be) as deeply shocking findings from reviews such as the Casey report (March 23) erode public confidence in the service. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reported on the findings of an inspection of Vetting, Misconduct and Misogyny (November 22) which saw a significant number of recommendations for all forces and other agencies to progress. These recommendations have been evaluated and the force is progressing any gaps and periodically reporting progress (as are all forces) to the national lead for this area of business for monitoring and reporting to the Home Office.

The Chief Constable has been very clear in setting a firm focus around standards, not only in relation to serious misconduct matters but also around other key priorities such as standards of uniform and care for force assets. This will be driven further also by the introduction of a PDR framework during April 23 which will see standards related objectives set for all employees.

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 (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 threat 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.

The PSD's monthly People Intelligence Board process chaired by the DCC and attended by key stakeholders provides an opportunity to identify harm reduction strategies, to develop preventive or proactive methods to identify and investigate corrupt practice and review of ongoing cases.

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

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

The ACU team has successfully identified and brought proceedings against officers and staff during 2022/23 where their behaviour has fallen below the standards that are expected of them. Counter-fraud arrangements are also periodically independently reviewed by the Ethics Review Panel (a sub group of the Ethics Transparency and Audit Panel).

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 force remains fully committed to tackling sexual misconduct, Abuse of Position for Sexual Purpose (APSP) and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). PSD continues to use the 'Know the Line' Campaign training to improve knowledge and understanding of sexual misconduct and APSP. There has been a continued increase in reporting, in part due to confidence in the investigations undertaken. During 2022/23, twenty-one per cent of total ACU investigations were related to sexual misconduct.

The changes noted in 21/22 around dedicated triage function provision for complaints, introduction of a prevent and intervention officer and increase in detectives to effectively manage complex investigations within both ACU and PSD, continue to support delivering the best service to the communities of Staffordshire. The relationship with the compliance manager for complaints remains strong and forms the basis of an organisational learning platform with relevant governance and ownership.

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 officer 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. Gifts and gratuities and notifiable association portfolios now sit within ACU to provide an added layer of scrutiny and assurance on these areas of potential corruption.

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 Vetting Unit operates in line with the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP). As part of the national response to the HMICFRS November 22 report, all forces are currently working to undertake a historical data wash of staff to add additional rigour to processes already in place. ETAP have regular development inputs from PSD which include vetting to aid oversight in this area.

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.

Staffordshire Police was inspected as a force around anti-corruption and vetting during November 22. No significant matters were raised during the inspection process with publication of the finalised report is due May 2023. The force will respond to any areas for improvement accordingly and in line with the ongoing broader national work.

Following on from the force and national inspections and the publication of Baroness Casey's report around the standards and culture within the Metropolitan Police, the force continues to strengthen its approach to ensuring that officers, staff and volunteers work with the highest level of integrity at all times. The 'know the line' campaign supports this work along with a refreshed 'set the standards' campaign to underpin the role that officer and staff play in building trust and confidence with the communities served. Where standards do fall short, the effective mechanisms and processes within the PSD look to identify and deal appropriately with those individuals.

The force gives due regard to the Equality Act 2010 as part of the process of decision making by ensuring that the following three aims are fully considered:

- 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.

In addition to the above and on a more general theme, both internal and external audit arrangements give 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 force's approach to internal audit has moved from a focus on financial areas only to now include other business areas where issues have been identified, to provide 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 information 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 wider members of the general public as part of a confidence survey. There has been a decrease around satisfaction levels over the last 12 months for victims which the force is working hard to address as part of the overall approach to being engaged. The latest confidence figures however, show

a 5% improvement, which the force will look to enhance further throughout the coming year. Information is also shared from the Commissioner's Independent Scrutiny Panels (CISPs) around specific areas of use of police powers e.g. stop and search and use of force. All information is taken through appropriate governance to allow learning and development to drive service delivery.

The policing plan has a specific focus on improving engagement with the service. The PEEL 2022 force report set out an area for improvement around driving improvements through an effective neighbourhood strategy. Following on from both peer review and close working with the College of Policing, the force has developed a brand new neighbourhood and engagement strategy which will be embedded throughout 23/24 alongside further investments in the Local Policing Model.

Niche RMS has delivered an opportunity to record community engagement and community priorities in a different way. Problem solving for individuals and communities is also a key focus and the force has appointed a senior leader to drive this activity in line with the new strategy and feedback from the inspectorate. However, the force still needs to maximise the benefits that this can bring to provide greater insight and understanding around what matters to communities.

Action 1 below will remain from the previous AGS to focus on embedding the local policing model underpinned by the new neighbourhood and engagement strategy.

Action 1: 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.

The Police Support Volunteers scheme ensures 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

The policing plan clearly sets out how the force will operate to achieve where it wants to be, this 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 has also been shared externally with communities and other key stakeholders as part of the longer-term process. The vision and key deliverables 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. Performance against these key measures is tracked at a monthly Performance Board chaired by the DCC. This has direct links with monthly operational tasking to track delivery against strategic areas of operational focus. On a daily basis a pacesetter meeting has been introduced, led at chief officer level to review and support dynamic daily operational demand requirements.



For the 2022/23 financial year, the Staffordshire Commissioner raised the precept by 4.19% or £10, which was the maximum amount permissible before calling a local referendum. This was supported by public consultation with 68% of respondents supporting an increase in local taxation to invest in policing. Overall, this resulted in a marginal increase in funding in real terms. This coupled with £2.948m of new savings allowed for new investments in areas of concern.

These investments were:

- An increase of 15 staff into call handling, to improve the response time to public contact via 999 and 101.
- An increase in IT staff, to ensure that Staffordshire police continue to keep pace in this fast-moving environment.
- An increase of 5 staff into crime recording, so victims of crime receive a faster referral into specialist support services.
- Initial investment to develop the Corporate Development function of the force

The investments outlined above have realised the following benefits:

- The investment into IT since this service was brought back in house has paid significant dividends; this includes reducing the number of outages from 53 in the previous reporting period to 1 in 2022.
- Improved contact centre performance. Despite the amount of 999 calls received continuing to increase compared to 12 months ago, over the last three months we 84% of all 999 calls have been answered in less than 10 seconds. This sees the force moving into an improving stronger position out of the 43 forces nationally.

Despite the challenges faced during the 2022/23 financial year, such as pay award being considerably higher than budgeted and non-pay inflation running high, the force has mitigated these in-year pressures through careful budget management ending the year with an underspend of £0.980m.

During the year, Staffordshire Police received a PEEL assessment of "Requires improvement" for its Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money. The report concluded that the force's financial plans are affordable and will support it to continue to meet future demands; the MTFs links to the force's plans and priorities and shows that reserves are sustainable.

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 changed from a directorate to a command and department structure during 22/23 in line with the local policing model implementation. Command leads are held to account for the delivery of services within their delegated budget. Finance Business Partners are aligned to command structures to give support and advice to management teams on the use of financial resource as well as to provide a link back to the force corporate centre.

Plans for significant change continue in line with planned investments in public protection where significant improvements in our contact centre. Further work has been undertaken to build the capability and capacity to deliver required change on an ongoing basis.

There is also a continued focus in the policing model to continue to enhance benefits of the around quicker response times, enhanced local knowledge to solve problems and more time to investigate crime to provide a high-quality service to victims. This has included a post implementation review independently supported by peers and the College of Policing.

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. These consider and reflect national priorities for example violence against women and girls.

During 2022/23 the force has been reviewing current and future capacity requirements around its Corporate Development functions including change management. External expert consultancy work has been undertaken specifically around the forces change programme and the capability and capacity required to deliver this at pace. A great deal of work has been undertaken in year to maximise business planning processes to best inform strategic decision making. This has seen a refreshed approach to the production of the Force Management Statement to allow further detailed analysis linking across to financial and longer-term planning arrangements. Further work remains in train to fully review the wider Corporate Development Department with a key focus on the building on the work to date around the business planning cycle.

Action 2 below will, therefore, remain from the previous AGS to focus on further recalibration and co-ordination of strategic business planning.

Action 2: Ongoing Action Full development of a Corporate Development Function will remain a key priority for 2023/24 building on the work to date. This will ensure maximum linkage across strategic planning cycle, delivery of change and development of comprehensive performance and benefits monitoring.

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

During 22/23 the force launched a new local policing model as a direct result of the review and evaluation work that had been undertaken to provide options (the model being the preferred one) for a revised and enhanced service delivery approach. During the last year the force has also been supporting the next phase of key change with ongoing work aligned to the control room and delivery of a public protection unit. These elements have a direct link to addressing the findings from the national child protection inspection findings and the early findings from the recent (March 23) revisit, along with the accelerated causes of concern from HMICFRS. It is important to recognise that ahead of this period the force had already adopted a culture of better evidence based self-critical thinking which has supported better understanding of the current issues and focus on the evaluation of the impact of interventions. To support this approach the force has invested in its own scrutiny and audit capability which has resulted in the undertaking of case file

auditing in line with the HMCFRS methodology which includes and mass data audit review of over 1000 records. These results have led to a comprehensive programme of activity to deliver the improvements required around quality investigations in to 23/24.

The force continues to invest in its ability to visualise data to allow more detailed and sophisticated analysis and less manual production. The force's digital enabling programme has seen develops around force contact and quality of investigation metrics which are used to evaluate and assess where further focus is required. There has been a major investment in investigation masterclasses to support frontline supervisors to be as effective in possible in providing direction and oversight. During 23/34 this will be rolled out further to all investigating officers and staff. 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. The roll out programme is regularly reviewed to ensure it is appropriately aligned to the areas of most risk to the force.

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 established partnerships with academic establishments to help understand and develop culture, and is leading the national agenda around forensics in partnership with Staffordshire University, developing upstream solutions for early intervention which assist around safeguarding issues, victims experience and increase capability and capacity. Further work has been commissioned during 22/23 with Keele University to explore racial disproportionality of policing with a focus on stop search, use of force and taser. This is a 3 year research project with presentations regularly provided to senior police leaders by academic partners. The work is formally overseen by the Chair of the Evidence Based Practice and Innovation Board.

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 intrinsically linked to a number of other boards including the time limited HMCFRS Gold Board which as set up to specifically oversee progress and activity related to the accelerated causes of concern and the force's escalation in to engaged monitoring. This board also monitors progress against wider force and national HMCFRS recommendations and related internal evaluations and audits.

The force has a system of internal control which is a significant part of the governance framework designed to manage risk. 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.

The force's internal performance monitoring and auditing have all indicated improvements during 22/23 in line with the intended impact of significant improvement and intervention

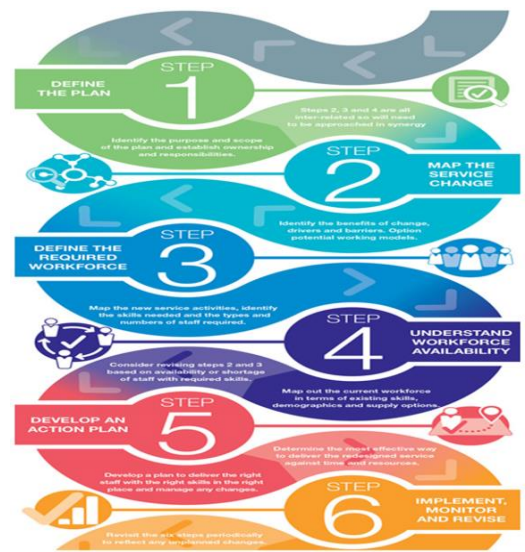
activity. The results of the HMICFRS casefile audit revisit (December 22) and evaluations through formalised HMICFRS checkpoint meetings and Police Performance Oversight Group (led by the His Majesty’s Chief Inspector and colleagues from national policing stakeholder groups) also support this whilst demonstrating that the force is now evaluating progress in line with independent assessments.

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

The Chief Constable has reset the tone and culture of the force which is underpinned by the importance of delivery through engaged leadership processes which are reflected by the chief officer team and frontline supervisors alike. The force has an area for improvement from the 22 PEEL report in this area which the Chief has taken personal responsibility to lead on and deliver.

In line with the policing plan there are clear plans in place around how the organisation will develop an exceptional workforce. A significant element of this is a focus on developing engaged, modern and empowered leaders. This has seen close working with the College of Policing to develop coaching and mentoring practices and development programmes for first line and middle line leaders. Additionally, a series of Sergeant pledge sessions has been delivered directly by the Chief Constable to emphasise and discuss the importance of leadership in addressing the concerns raised by HMICFRS. During January 2023 a new professionalising investigations programme (PIP) level 2 supervisors course was also launched to support this work. Although commenced during April 23, it is worthy of note here, the force has reinstated a formalised performance development review (PDR) recognising that the previous check in approach was not able to adequately support the forces leadership requirements and revised approach. The benefits of this reintroduction will be further explored in the 23/24 AGS.

The force has enhanced its approach to the assessment required for the FMS with a clear focus on understanding capacity to support the strategic planning cycle. Workforce planning is a critical part of this cycle and the development of a more comprehensive skills matrix has supported better understanding of 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. The force, in line with the national picture, still has a relatively young



workforce with less experience than in previous years which has implications around capability and capacity in the shorter term. There has been an increase from 4% of officers being 25 years and under in 2019 to just over 17% at the end of 2022/23. The force does however welcome the uplift in the overall numbers of officers.

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 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 continued programme of change along with supporting supervisory roles to oversee and support more effectively as outlined above.

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 continues to review and enhance governance arrangements where required.

Executive Officers at Assistant Chief Constable level and above must successfully complete a national standard of Strategic Command which has seen two new external appointments to the ACC role. This has come at a time where the force can optimise new expertise and stability at its executive level. 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. 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 continued delivery of the policing plan and enhancement and further embedding of the FMS have resulted in further improvements around understanding and developing the forces capacity and capability for 2022/23. This will remain a focus through business as usual processes moving forward.

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

All key strategic decisions are made at the monthly Executive Management Board (see section 7 for more detail) which is chaired by the Chief Constable. 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 and matters are reflected in the agenda and minutes of the next formal board for transparency and completeness. Command 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 strategic level boards along with any matters by exception. During 2022/23, the force has enhanced decision making routes and refreshed decision making thresholds to reflect the new operating model and address some of the gaps and issues identified from previous governance review work. This is a continual process which sees terms of reference and key functions regularly reviewed. Additionality to the structure has been stood up following the force entering into the engaged level of monitoring, this will be kept under review for the year ahead.

The force holds a monthly Strategic Performance Board chaired by the DCC. Under the direction of this board, the force continues to report against the performance framework which underpins the policing plan which includes more real-time and self-serve data in line with key priorities. Governance around performance will be further enhanced during 23/24 with the introduction of a Quarterly Performance Meeting (QPM) which will involve all chief officers and a wider range of senior leaders than that of the monthly board. This will look to monitor local delivery more closely along with appropriate scrutiny across the entire organisation to ensure it is aligned to force and local priorities and give the opportunity of performance area deep dives as required.

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 undertaken to ensure effectiveness in this area:

- Monthly Chief Constable chaired Executive Management Board with risk as a standing agenda item
- Individual risk registers for each command and department as well as specific registers for key projects / change programmes
- Regular internal audit reports around risk management – not undertaken for 22/23, next due early 23/24 in line with a review / enhancement to process
- 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 monitored on a monthly basis by the SCO at the Strategic Governance Board. ETAP also receive regular force updates and work closely with the force as required.

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.

The force is currently reviewing its organisational learning arrangements and this will be an area of focus for 23/24 to understand lessons learnt both internally and nationally and ensure these are used to drive improvements and mitigate against potential operational and organisational risks.

There is a programme of force conducted internal reviews which cover a wide range of operational areas to ensure that the recommendations, especially from HMICFRS and Internal Audit are being progressed and service provision enhanced. There is an annual programme which for 22/23 has been predominately focused around the accelerated causes of concern to monitor and track the effectiveness of interventions and improvement activity. This process has identified that although still more to do, that there have been notable improvements in year which have also been formally articulated to force and published by HMICFRS following the revisit and crime audit at the end of 2022. Additional investment has been made in this area and further is planned around the force's capacity to conduct real time quality reviews, which will include developing local capability (maintaining the corporate standard and methodology) to enable larger samples to be drawn and reviewed on a continual basis.

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 Commissioner and Chief Constable work with colleagues and peers on a regional basis (the West Midlands region – Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Mercia and West Midlands). The Commissioner chairs the Regional Governance Group and oversees with colleagues the performance of regional and national collaborations between police forces; these include the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), 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. There is also a two force collaboration board between Staffordshire and West Midlands Police to oversee the Central Motorways Police Group (CMPG), Firearms Licencing Unit and Joint Legal Services chaired by the DCC with attendance by the Commissioner's Chief Executive Officer.

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 has invested in its crime validation capability to seek to address this. This has seen a significant improvement in the time it takes to record crime during 22/23 which is an outstanding area for improvement for

the force from the PEEL 22 report. 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. In year review of this area has resulted in the production of a comprehensive information management strategy. Implementation of the strategy will be a key focus for this area for 23/24 to add further rigour around systems and data assurance and digital capability developments.

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 developed to

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

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 again has a balanced budget for 2022/23.

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.

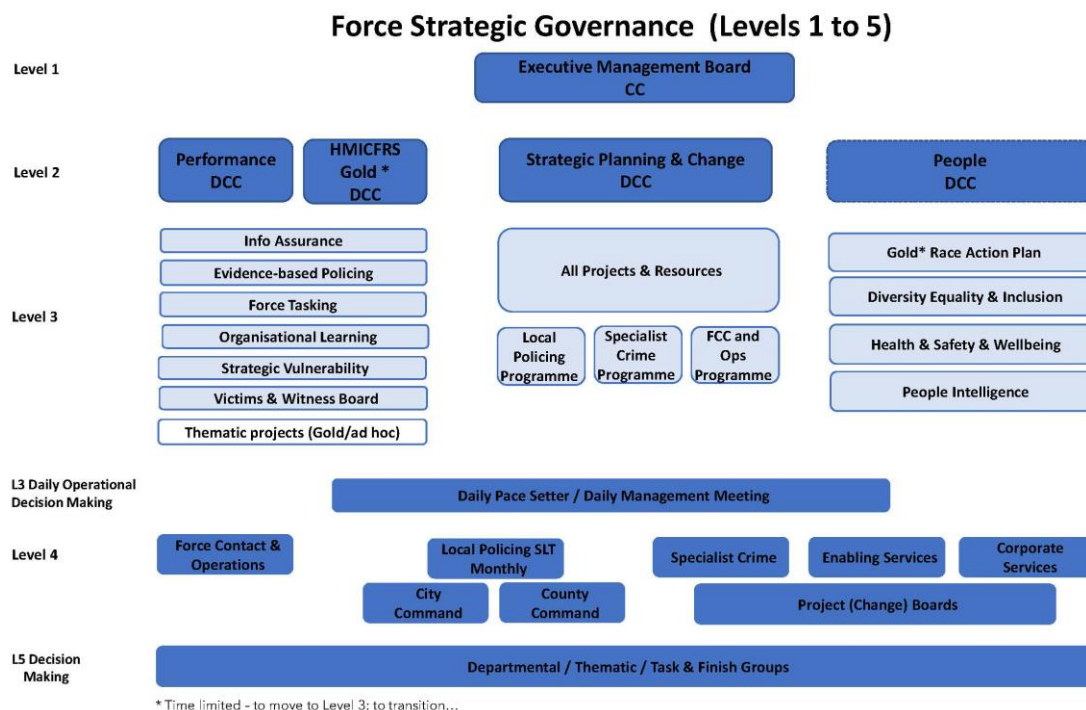
The force is aligned to the Home Office Financial Code of Management and the relevant CIPFA codes of practice. The FMCP is issued under section 17 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, which permits the Secretary of State to issue codes of practice to all Police and Crime Commissioners (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 2022/23 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.

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

In year adjustments, including the introduction of time limited HMICFRS Gold Board have been made to the force’s governance structure. In addition, the force has introduced a Race Action Plan board chaired by the Chief Constable to place appropriate governance around the force’s delivery contribution to this national work. 2022/23 also saw the introduction of the daily pacesetter meeting to support more effective day to day operational decision making. The current position is given below:



Although the force has amended elements of governance structure in line with the action set for 21/22 there will be further emphasis and review of this area during 23/24. This will be in line with the assessment of progress around key HMICFRS progress to support a move from the governance of rapid improvement activity to a business as usual approach as the force has regained confidence in its performance, audit and accountability mechanisms. The policing plan will have a review and reset during 2023 to set ambitions

up to 2025. The force will take the opportunity at this point to re-evaluate the above structure and the processes that align, to support further effective accountability delivery.

Action 3 ongoing 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 formally by the Commissioner via a number of scrutiny meetings including the Strategic Governance Board and Public Quarterly Performance Meeting. In addition, monthly one to one meetings take place which also include the DCC and Chief Executive of the SCO. To maintain an ongoing open dialogue there are also weekly less formal catch ups to discuss day to day business. Alongside this, the DCC meets regularly with the Chief Executive of the PFCC and the Chief Finance Officer also meets on a regular basis with the Director of Finance for the PFCC.

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 has been via the HMICFRS Gold Board to hold those charged with delivery to account and to closely monitor progress and co-ordinate support where blocks and issues are reported.

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 Chief Officer Team meeting.

The role of internal audit is provided to the force via a contracted arrangement, for 2022/23 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 2022/23 the audit opinions have shown a mixed picture. Eight audits of the control environment have been undertaken that resulted in formal assurance opinions. Of these reviews, 3 reports concluded that 'substantial' assurance could be taken (Freedom of Information compliance, Corporate Resourcing, and HMICFRS governance); 1 report concluded reasonable assurance (Pay progression Standard); 2 reports concluded that 'partial' assurance could be taken (Health and Safety including remote working and Fleet Management); one report concluded that 'reasonable' assurance could be taken (Pay roll progression); with one report concluding minimal assurance at the time of review (Property store).

Significant investment in addressing the minimal and partial assurance areas has been put in place which has included revised and enhanced senior leadership and oversight. A full

review of property store arrangements has been supported by external consultants and practices and processes in relation fleet reviewed, revised and approved. Work also continues to address the management actions relating to remote working with planned roll out of health and safety training for 2024.

A follow up review on those management actions reported as complete has reported good progress.

Scheduled follow up around Asset Management and Firearms Storage and destruction has been deferred until 2023/24 due to changes in the wider operational model. Management actions relating to previous audits for both are tracked centrally with a number of asset management actions remaining in progress linked to the IT plan and scheduled technology solutions. Firearms storage actions were completed in early 2023, however with the deferral of the follow up work no additional independent auditing has been undertaken to ensure that process and compliance has been sustained.

Overall the Annual Internal Audit Report concludes that overall for the 12 months ended 31 March 2023, 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.

ETAP continues to advise the Commissioner and the Chief Constable 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 both corporate sole under the spotlight.

Staffordshire Police's external auditors, 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 the final audit letter from the 2020/21 and 21/22 accounts as significant ongoing delays continue. It is therefore not possible to offer a position in relation to this for the 2021/22 AGS or for this 22/23 statement at the time of writing. Further information is awaited also around the proposed planning schedule for 22/23. ETAP have formally raised this matter with EY and this remains an area of focus for the Finance panel and ETAP and has remained as a standing agenda item for each meeting.

As already indicate, 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 and was able to accelerate plans already in train to begin to address these. The force also received its overall PEEL inspection report during the latter part of 2022 which included the identification of a number of areas where the force should focus improvement. These areas along with the accelerated causes of concern are monitored closely on a monthly basis via the HMICFRS Gold Board. The board is attended by representatives from the SCO and HMICFRS to allow openness and transparency around the forces own assessment of sustained delivery. More recently, an internal audit review was undertaken to assess the robustness of the governance in place to monitor, review and challenge force progress, this was awarded a substantial assurance level. The next phase of the change programme will continue to provide further opportunities for sustained delivery. The forces strategic planning process, utilising the latest information from the FMS, will ensure sound evidence-based plans are set for addressing future service delivery risks.

During March 2023 the for force underwent a NCPI inspection revisit to follow up and assess progress against the recommendations made from the 2021 report. The finalised report is due later in the year, however early feedback indicates good progress in a number of key areas with more work to do to, largely line with the other recommendations held by the force. The force has used the early feedback to drive further activity whilst awaiting publication of the overall findings.

The force has continued throughout the year to work very closely with HMICFRS, The College of Policing, and other forces to identify good practice and undertake peer reviews and benchmarking. This is assisting, alongside the force's own planning arrangements, in providing long term solutions in line with the Chief's ambition to be an outstanding force.

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 an improved and good level of assurance. There is still much work to do to meet the collective ambition of returning to being an outstanding force, however it is evident that the governance arrangements that have been implemented and enhanced during 2022/23 have demonstrated a revised grip 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. The force is also able to offer a strong level of assurance around the financial management of public money.

This improved opinion is given to offer a fair and balanced assessment of the response to the on-going challenges during 2022/23. Assurance is also given that for 2023/24 all matters will be appropriately monitored and subject to sustained, and where required enhanced, scrutiny.

ACTIONS

Update against 2021/22 AGS 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.

22/23 Update:

Following on from the implementation of the Local Policing Model in June 2022 seeing the creation of 10 local policing teams, the force has created and signed off a new Neighbourhood Policing Strategy to underpin this. The strategy reflects national best practice and feedback from peers, which includes a specific strand around community engagement. Implementation and roll out is being overseen at Chief Officer level to ensure that delivery is in line with the ambition as set out in the policing plan.

Status: Ongoing for 2023/24

Action 2: Ongoing Action The development of Corporate Function will be a priority for 2023/24 to ensure maximum linkage across strategic planning cycle, delivery of change and development of comprehensive performance and benefits monitoring.

22/23 Update:

Initial focus has been around a robust and externally supported review of the force's change capability and capacity in order to coordinate and drive activity at the desired pace. This has been supported by investment in external objective engagement. Additional resource and training have been put in place to build a better scrutiny and audit capability which is critical in tracking the impact of actions to address areas where improvements are required. Further work remains in train to review the all other elements within this central function to underpin the force's continuous improvement approach.

Status: Ongoing for 2023/24

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

22/23 Update:

The force has enhanced its workforce planning and forecasting ability. This has been supported by the development of a comprehensive skills matrix, enhanced monitoring of planned moves to understand capability and capacity, and further scrutiny around the movement and growth within the organisation. The force has also met its uplift target during this period.

Status: Complete and business as usual for 22/23 and beyond

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

22/23 Update:

The force has grown and developed its own scrutiny and audit capability which has resulted in the undertaking of case file auditing in line with the HMCFRS methodology which includes and mass data audit review of over 1000 records. These results have led to a comprehensive programme of activity to deliver the improvements required around quality investigations.

Status: Complete and business as usual for 22/23 and beyond

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.

22/23 Update:

In year adjustments, including the introduction of time limited HMICFRS Gold Board have been made to the force's governance structure. In addition, the force has introduced a Race Action Plan board chaired by the Chief Constable to place appropriate governance around the force's delivery contribution to this national work. 2022/23 also saw the introduction of the daily pacesetter meeting to support more effective day to day operational decision making. There will be further review of this area during 23/24.

Status: Complete as appropriate for 22/23 but further work in this area for 23/24

Actions arising from the 2022/23 AGS to be progressed during the 2023/24 period

Action 1 carry forward : 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 carry forward: 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 carry forward: 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.

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