

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

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

Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams' fifth Police Public Performance Meeting took place on 17 May 2023. This is the third public meeting since the publication of the latest His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) report, requiring Staffordshire Police to make improvements to services for the public of Staffordshire. It also provides the opportunity to share the progress made since the last meeting against the Commissioner's and the Chief Constable's vision for policing. The Commissioner is keen that the key measures, revisited each meeting, will demonstrate the progress being made against delivering the service-level ambitions in his Police & Crime Plan, in the Staffordshire Policing Plan as well as the National Crime and Policing Measures (NCPM) in the government's Beating Crime Plan. Where appropriate, these are highlighted as local priorities or those that form the national Digital Crime Performance Pack (DCPP). This formal response to the performance report is designed to satisfy the statutory requirement to comment on Staffordshire's contribution to the national measures and be transparent about current progress against local priorities. The Commissioner is satisfied that, where appropriate, Staffordshire Police have used local data to demonstrate their current position.

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

Chief Constable Chris Noble introduced the performance pack and summarised HMICFRS' comments regarding the force's current progress against recommendations, which indicates that they are encouraged by our progress whilst challenging Staffordshire Police to do more. There is certainly additional demand coming from areas outside of Policing and this is borne out by recent increases in 999 demand. Progress is being made nationally between the Home Office and Health under the banner of 'Right Care, Right Person'. Chief Constable Chris Noble said, "It frustrates me greatly that my officers are spending more time very often on a shift in an A&E department, looking after a vulnerable person, than they are in the home of someone who has suffered domestic abuse, or caring for children or pro-actively tackling crime. Something has to change if Policing is going to be allowed to focus on crime and disorder." Staffordshire's local relationship with the Integrated Care Board gives us a degree of confidence in building for the future.

All Crime is increasing and sexual offences and domestic abuse are all up, and it is a difficult picture although the Commissioner commented that it was a good thing that the uplift in Police officers has been implemented putting us in the best position for the future. The Chief Constable was pleased to see these types of offences increasing, indicating that vulnerable victims are confident enough to report here in Staffordshire.

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

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

There has been a continued increase in demand over the last year and 999 performance is improving. Triage continues to assist 101 demand, and 999 performance remained stable in the last 3 months, despite an increase in the volumes of calls compared to the previous 3 months. BT 999 call data is published on police.uk each month and Staffordshire has started to climb the league tables amongst other forces.

Approximately 88% of all 101 calls are dealt with through Triage, allowing people to have an early conversation to identify the nature of the call, and 57% of those calls are dealt with at the first point of contact at Triage. Live Chat is now available as a single digital channel for contact, replacing the spread of digital channels across Twitter, Facebook and others. Feedback has been good over the last month with positive experiences of the chat function. The Commissioner noted that 101 abandoned rates are increasing and would like to bring this back to the next meeting to understand the length of time people are waiting before abandoning their call.

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

The new local policing model, moving from 3 response hubs to 10 hubs, went live at the end of June 2022 and has seen local policing teams aligned with PCSOs, Specials and detectives (CID). The force is not yet meeting the response targets it sets itself.

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

### 3.3. Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

The Commissioner noted the 37% decrease in ASB which appears more dramatic than the public might be experiencing. The changes in Home Office Crime Recording indicate that crimes which may have been dealt with as ASB are now recorded as harassment, malicious communications and other crimes, although the general trend remains down. The people of Staffordshire are undoubtedly safer in their own homes than they were 12 years ago although there is significantly more risk of cyber crime and fraud which ACC Becky Riggs discussed later on in the meeting. The Commissioner also noted Staffordshire's selection as one of the pilot areas for the ASB programme the government have implemented.

### 3.4. Reduce Neighbourhood Crime (NPCM)

Neighbourhood crime includes burglary residential, personal robbery, theft from and theft of vehicles, vehicle interference and theft from a person. The notable anomaly this quarter is vehicle crime increases, particularly in the south of the county. The force has collaborated with neighbouring forces to ensure a joined-up approach and improve sharing of information through Op Bormus. This is the force's response to car key burglary and keyless vehicle theft, both of which have increased in line with national and regional increases. There are fewer cars coming into the country in general and there is now a market for stolen cars, exploiting technology or burglary to carry out these crimes. Chief Constable Chris Noble commented that the force has learnt from this proactive action plan and that he would be happy to bring back vehicle crime trends to a future public performance meeting.

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

In Staffordshire, there is no set pattern to people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on our roads. The issue must be tackled in partnership to design and build roads, set speed limits and traffic calming measures, target vulnerable locations, hospitals, care homes and schools alongside Police safety camera teams and the Community Speed Watch programme. Chief Constable Chris Noble will continue to invest in this area, stating that all KSIs are preventable by taking due care and attention, slowing down and assuming that others may make a mistake. The Police safety camera team has two new vans and new digital cameras going into dangerous locations and exploring digital applications to support assessing locations more quickly and night-time cameras. This remains a priority due to the impact deaths on the roads have on people's lives. Speeding vehicles are still an issue for local people and the significant number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured recently ensures this will remain a priority for future meetings. Progress within the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership includes new digital cameras in high-risk areas in the next few months and a focus on tackling insurance offences, mobile phone and drink and drug driving offences.

## 4. Prevent Harm and Protect People

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

Staffordshire is not an outlier in national homicide data from the national DCP, sitting 21st out of 42 forces for volume of homicides per million using the Homicide Index\*. Staffordshire has experienced a broad range of murders ranging from domestic murder and child murder to drug/criminal dispute-related murder.

Alcohol, drug misuse and mental health are common factors in murder investigations. Many of these murders are the result of broader social issues and require a long-term holistic approach to breaking the generational cycle of violence.

Staffordshire Police, together with the Commissioner's Office, Local Authorities, health trusts, education, Probation and the voluntary sector, have established the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Violence Reduction Alliance to tackle the root causes of violence. Education and prevention continue to be a key part of the Staffordshire Strategy.

ACC Becky Riggs noted that Staffordshire is investing 117 staff and £6m into the Public Protection Unit including investment into rape and Serious Sexual Offences to ensure Operation Soteria evidence-based Policing processes will be embedded into Staffordshire. In addition to Soteria, the Public Protection Unit will also invest in child protection teams and harm reduction hubs to support the most vulnerable in our communities, including domestic abuse victims and missing children.

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

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

Nationally this is measured through hospital admissions of under-25s for assault with a sharp object, and Police-recorded information of offences involving discharge of a firearm. A local measure for knife crime and gun crime is used at the Public Performance Meeting to show Staffordshire's position and act as a benchmark for future progress. Knife crime has increased by 26.0% (177) in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months, and has also increased by 19.0% (137) compared to the national Beating Crime Plan baseline.

Serious Violence (Robbery and Violence with Injury) has seen a 22.4% increase compared to the National Beating Crime Plan baseline. The new offence of non-fatal strangulation and suffocation offence that came in to force in June 22 makes up 32% (512) of all more serious violence crimes, and has contributed significantly to the increase seen compared to the previous 12 months and national Beating Crime Plan baseline.

Both the Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) measures show an increasing trend. The Beating Crime Plan measure shows an increase of 67.6% (8,857) increased compared to the national Beating Crime Plan baseline 2018/2019. Op Jullart has been implemented recently to ensure DA attendance was prioritised, with the correct supervisory oversight to protect victims.

An area for significant comment within the Crime table on page 47 is Personal Robbery, which indicates that mobile phones, money and vehicles are still a target for vulnerable people particularly children. Other increases are seen in business robbery and public order, more serious violence (non-fatal strangulation) and theft of motor vehicles.

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

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

Staffordshire is no longer a national outlier for recorded drugs crime within the drugs section (per 100,000 population) of the Home Office's DCPD compared to the national baseline 2018/19, with the 14<sup>th</sup> largest increase in the last 12 months compared to the 2018/19 baseline. With the significant risk of modern slavery, county lines and child exploitation, drugs activity remains a priority for pro-active teams within the force. The Commissioner also discussed the Monkey Dust issue in Staffordshire which has been identified as a national issue destroying people's lives. Monkey Dust is a Class B substance in the form of an off-white powder which can be swallowed, injected or snorted. It is from a family of drugs known as synthetic cathinones, so-called "designer drugs". Monkey Dust is highly addictive and unpredictable, dampening perceptions of pain and causing powerful hallucinations which lead to severe paranoia. Operation Rivent is the force's approach to understanding and mitigating the scale of the impact of Monkey Dust, in terms of the organised criminality of supply. This is through disruption and enforcement, and also working specifically with partners to support those affected by Monkey Dust use, referring them through established pathways and identifying diversionary activity. This local approach is broadly in line with the government's national drug strategy 'Hope over Harm'. Research and treatment opportunities are all limited due to the nature of this new issue.

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

Prior to arriving, ACC Riggs worked for the City of London Police and led the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau – the national service and data lake for the impact of fraud. National headlines are that reported crime for fraud is approximately a third of all crime, but unreported crime could be closer to 40%. In Staffordshire, crime numbers are just under 5,500, in line with national trends, with reported losses at around £17m. Very recently, the government launched the new National Fraud Strategy, recognising it is a significant challenge for all agencies not just Policing. The strategy has three pillars for Policing, online service providers such as the banking sector, and victim support services. Staffordshire victims can access a local victim support service and will also now be able to access the national Economic Crime Victim Care Unit, providing enhanced services and expert advice for victims of fraud offences.

There has been a decrease of 2% in Action Fraud cases reported by Staffordshire residents compared to the national baseline in 2018/2019. There has been a 39% decrease in those referred back to Staffordshire to conduct local investigations against the same baseline. The Chief Constable acknowledged that it is an under-reported area by individuals and businesses and certainly a growth area for the force. Criminal justice positive outcomes are up to 11% although the vast majority (52%) result in a disposal of 'unable to progress the investigation'.

Staffordshire already has a sizeable team of experts to deal with fraud disseminations and investigations of a significant size which not all forces have, meaning Staffordshire will be in a good position to deal with improved data sharing anticipated from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau.

### 5. Support Victims and Witnesses

5.1. Victims' Code of Practice Compliance: The percentage of victims referred to support providers within the 2-day target reduced slightly to 67%. Priority is given to vulnerable victims and serious crimes, and those are referred within the 2-day target. Bank holidays and training for new recruits are impacting on the transfer time to the Victim Gateway support service. 85% of victim-based crimes have had a victim contract added in the last 12 months.

#### 5.2. Improve Satisfaction among Victims and Witnesses, with focus on Victims of DA (NCPM)

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

#### 5.3. Public Confidence

The initial public confidence survey was conducted in June 2022 prior to the launch of the new operating model, to provide a baseline of how the public felt before the changes were implemented. The results of the second survey show an improving public perception of Staffordshire Police. In January 2023, 1,602 telephone surveys were conducted and the results indicated that increases were seen in the majority of questions, and others remained stable. Key findings are 95% of people feel safe in their local area during the day, and a 5% increase in whether people feel they could rely on their local Police team if they need them.

The Commissioner is keen that the public have confidence in how complaints are handled. In general, there is an upward trend in total cases of dissatisfaction. The force has been working to improve performance and restructured the Professional Standards Department (PSD) to introduce a front-end triage system, with two dedicated customer service officers to provide a real-time service when a complaint comes in and reparation for customers. This has reduced contact times and ensured better signposting of complaints to reduce time spent on finalisation.

## 6.0 Reducing Offending and Reoffending

### 6.1. Outcomes

The Criminal Justice Outcome rate is 12% in the 12 months to March 2023, and is stable compared to the previous 12 months and baseline in 2019/20. The Criminal Justice Outcome rate was 13.1% or 1,106 outcomes in March 2023, which included 798 charges/summons, 96 cautions/conditional cautions, and 200 community resolutions.

Local data from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has been used to understand criminal justice and its timeliness in Staffordshire. The information for crime to court and crime to conviction at court is based on rates, rather than volumes for a more balanced comparison:

- 8.0% of all crimes in the last 12 months (April 2022 to March 2023) are prosecuted at court which has decreased slightly (-2%) compared to the baseline in 2019/2020.
- 6.7% of all crimes in the last 12 months (April 2022 to March 2023) end in a conviction at court which has decreased slightly (-1.9%) compared to the baseline in 2019/2020.
- Finalised cases in the last 12 months (April 2022 to March 2023) have decreased by -12% compared to the 2019/20 baseline, due to the ongoing issues with backlogs of court cases caused by the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Commissioner advised that the Local Criminal Justice Board in June will discuss our local outcome rate compared with other areas.

## 7. A More Effective Criminal Justice System

### 7.1. Criminal Justice – Timeliness

The key headline from the national Digital Data Dashboard is that Staffordshire is an outlier in timeliness from recorded offence to Police charge for a victim-based crime. The average time to Police charge in Staffordshire has decreased slightly to 96 days, above the national average (41 days). The force is intent on developing clear investigation plans, and increasing staff in the Public Protection Unit to boost capacity and speed up investigations. This will be reviewed on a regular basis to track progress in bringing this time closer to the national average. The additional context around most similar forces and national datasets aids understanding and provides additional reassurance of Staffordshire's current performance, and will be brought back for more detail at the next meeting.

## 8. Enabling Services: HR & Finance Update

### 8.1. Operation Uplift, Officer Recruitment

The force met and exceeded the officer Uplift numbers as at March 2023. Further recruitment of 60 officers in the coming financial year will continue, with future budget setting to ensure the force lives within its means. It is likely that the emphasis nationally will move from officer numbers to value, with Police staff rather than officers. Staffordshire has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest number of officers per 1,000 population. The Chief Constable noted that Staffordshire was an outlier on PCSOs with a relatively high number. The Commissioner was delighted that the budget for the financial year is on target to meet the forecast.

The Commissioner, Fire & Rescue and Police were exploring co-locating Fire & Rescue with Police in Stafford, and it has now been decided to upgrade Stafford Police station and keep a Police resource in the town centre.

The Commissioner thanked the Chief Officer team for a very useful meeting, noting the uplift in some areas whilst keeping Staffordshire a low crime area, which is down to the hard work and dedication of officers and staff.

The next Public Performance Meeting is October 4th 2023, 14:30 at the Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford.