

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

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

Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams' seventh police Public Performance Meeting took place on 23 January 2024 and was the last meeting before the upcoming PFCC election on 2 May 2024. The Commissioner has been in post for 3 years and 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 & 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 to 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. This meeting will be Commissioner Ben Adams' last Public Performance Meeting.

The Commissioner welcomed Chief Constable Chris Noble and the new Deputy Chief Constable Jon Roy, along with Chief Superintendent Paul Talbot, Head of Force Contact. The Commissioner was keen to reflect on how much more local and responsive the force is now and where it is headed, and asked the Chief to share progress since the last meeting.

The Chief introduced the performance pack and noted that HMICFRS are satisfied with the improvements the force has made around victim contact and has now discharged the accelerated cause for concern in this area. The 'quality of investigation' concern remains active and much work is taking place around leadership, supervision and scrutiny to increase confidence and assurance in this area. In particular, the focus on leadership and accountability remains a priority within the force, with investment in inspection ranks covering all areas of business. This includes ten new local Chief Inspectors working in partnership with local partners; additional Chief Superintendents in public protection and serious crime and enough Sergeants to scrutinise and hold officers to account, making sure victims receive the service they deserve and are kept informed, and making sure all reasonable lines of enquiries are covered. This process has involved learning from other forces and the ongoing audit scrutiny of 5,000 concluded cases to take steps where there are opportunities, provide feedback to officers to identify learning and recognise good work. The force is also exploring a proportionate approach to Out of Court Disposals for offenders to prevent reoffending. This involves a culture shift and creates an opportunity to widen the breadth of outcomes available.

Police recorded crime increases have started to stabilise, including vehicle crime in particular, which has been a focus at previous Public Performance Meetings. The Chief was also keen to highlight a pleasing increase in criminal justice outcomes which are indicators of effective investigations. Fatalities on the roads are of concern, and the meeting covered what we and partners are doing to address the recent rise in tragedies. Demand can be unpredictable and presents challenges which can be partly dealt with by partnership initiatives such as 'Right Care, Right Person' which is gaining traction in Staffordshire.

Staffordshire Police have recently completed a historic data wash of vetting on all staff, and the Chief reported a clean bill of health with the Deputy Chief Constable adding that no officers, staff or volunteers required further investigation. The force takes a robust, ruthless approach to rooting out those who don't meet its standards. The force is not complacent and continues to see misconduct cases, having already implemented a 'Know the Line' campaign to encourage internal reporting. The force intends to capitalise on this momentum to embed the new code of ethics, adopting the national Crimestoppers integrity call line, driving investigation quality up and utilising the lessons from the historic data wash.

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

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

The Commissioner reassured the meeting that keeping people informed and improving how they are dealt with at the first point of contact via 101 will remain a priority if he remains in post. Triage continues to assist in managing 101 demand, and 999 performance has remained stable in the last 3 months. The total average time to answer 101 calls, including pre-triage and post-triage waits, has been under 10 minutes for the majority of the last 12 months, although the force acknowledges there are longer outliers. The triage approach to calls for service is now in place and operating, where possible, between 8am and 10pm, seven days a week. This service supports the force to identify and prioritise vulnerability quickly, ensuring immediate support when appropriate. Triage resolves two-thirds of these calls at the first point of contact and there are options for a queue-buster call-back service. Work continues to understand more fully the rate of abandoned calls both pre- and post-triage service.

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

The local policing model, moving from 3 response hubs to 10 hubs, has seen local policing teams aligned with PCSOs, Specials and detectives (CID). The force is not yet meeting the response targets it sets itself, with less than 50% of Grade 1 incidents attended within 15 minutes. National targets are likely to be 15 minutes for urban areas and 20 minutes for rural areas, but the Chief is keen to keep the 15-minute target for both rural and urban areas and to continue to improve the speed of response and service to victims.

In December 2023, 47% of Grade 2 incidents were attended within 2 hours of the call being received, with an average attendance time of 2 hours 19 minutes. It has only been possible to measure this since the new graded response policy was implemented on 4 August 2023, as prior to this Grade 2 incidents included scheduled appointments which impacted on the data. 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 reported 24% decrease in ASB. All types of ASB have decreased, however, the majority of the decrease is in the personal nuisance category -45% (-3,869), due to the better identification and classification of behavioural crimes.

In June 2023, we were selected to take part in the delivery of the national ASB pilot programme, which trials concentrated police and partner intervention in high-volume ASB areas. Five areas were initially identified following detailed data analysis and in consultation with community safety partners. These are: Stafford town centre; Newcastle town centre; Burton urban ward; Hanley and Etruria; and Fenton West and Mount Pleasant. The pilot went live with phase 1 on 1 July 2023, with high-visibility foot patrols by police officers and PCSOs across the locations. So far, this has provided 3,932 additional hours of patrols across these five areas. Cannock South & West, which covers the town centre/Cannock Park and the McArthur Glenn outlet village, was added to the list of areas for extra patrols on 2 January 2024.

In addition to the ASB pilot programme, two funding proposals were successfully submitted to the Home Office under Round 5 of the Safer Streets Fund. Under the Cannock bid, the local authority is already tendering for contracts including enhanced CCTV, street lighting, taxi marshal initiative and various other proposals that will be paid for by Safer Streets funding. As part of the Longton and Tunstall bid, plans are in place to enhance the CCTV to provide greater coverage of the town centre and for alleyway gating. Some of this work will cross over into the tackling violence against woman and girls area of business through making the streets safer after dark.

#### 3.4. Reduce Neighbourhood Crime (NPCM)

Neighbourhood crime includes burglary residential, personal robbery, theft from and of vehicles, vehicle interference and theft from a person. Neighbourhood crime is stable (+1) in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months. Neighbourhood crime has increased by 1.6% (152) compared to the national Beating Crime Plan baseline which is the calendar year 2019. Burglary residential and vehicle interference have both increased by 10% in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months and have also increased compared to the national Beating Crime Plan baseline. With Operation Bormus' proactive patrols and intelligence gathering back in operation, and Burglary attendance mandatory, the force now hopes to see significant reductions around these crimes that affect most people.

#### 3.5. Road Safety: Enforcement and Community Speed Watch (CSW)

Killed and serious injury (KSI) road traffic collisions have increased by 38% (+83) compared to the previous year, and by 28% (+66) in the last 12 months compared to the 2019-2020 baseline. December 2023 saw higher numbers of fatal collisions (nine), three of which were pedestrians, but there are no particular trends to note.

In December 2023, the force relaunched Operation Lightning in response to the volumes of fatal collisions with a focus on making roads in Staffordshire safer. Operation Lightning has two main aims: to prevent KSI collisions on our roads; and to prohibit criminal use of our roads – essentially making the roads in our county safer for legal purposes. Operation Lightning's focused initiatives have culminated in 54 arrests, 392 breath tests & drugs wipes, and 38 vehicles recovered.

Part of Staffordshire's police uplift investment is going into staffing the Roads Policing Unit and delivering a 24/7 service to the public. The coverage does already exist through CMPG on high-speed roads within the county, but additional vehicles and the additional shift staffed by 5 extra officers will be in place by the end of February.

Speeding vehicles, mobile phones and seatbelt offences are still a concern for local people and the impact of volunteer CSW teams cannot be underestimated. Roads policing is community policing, as much about education as enforcement. Deputy Commissioner Helen Fisher noted that there are still some areas without CSW groups which needs addressing and she will pursue this as part of the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership.

### 4. Prevent Harm and Protect People

The Commissioner expressed disappointment with the recent publication of national stats, which indicated larger increases in crime than expected due to a crime recording backlog. The Commissioner sought assurance from the Chief that these delays would not occur again, as it misleads the public and the force when trying to understand their business and calls for service. The Chief was keen to stress that the early warning mechanisms and action plans that would be implemented at the first sign of a similar issue will avoid future repetition of this issue.

All reported crime has increased by 2.5% (2,118) in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months, but has increased by 10.7% (8,457) when compared to the baseline 2019/20. Per 1,000 population, Staffordshire ranks **21<sup>st</sup> in the 43 forces** for total recorded crime to July 2023.

More serious violence with injury, public order, theft of motor vehicles, vehicle interference, possession of weapons, other violence against the person, and rape have increased in the last 12 months compared to both the previous 12 months and the baseline. The Commissioner is keen to see increases in police-generated crime and proactivity, and the Chief echoed his comments by indicating the force were on the front foot, increasing local policing and intelligence-led stop searches looking for offenders and offences around drugs and weapons.

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

Staffordshire is not an outlier in national Homicide data from the national Digital Crime and Performance Pack, sitting 7<sup>th</sup> out of 8 most similar forces and 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 42 forces for rate of homicides in two years per million. The Chief noted that there was no increase in particular (+1) and the force will continue to focus on tackling domestic abuse, intervening early with a Violence Against Women & Girls approach focused on offenders and acceptable behaviour.

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.

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

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

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 this is used as a benchmark for future progress. Knife crime has decreased by 4.2% (-34) in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months, but has increased by 28.2% (169) compared to the national Beating Crime Plan baseline 2019. Compared to our most similar forces (MSF), Staffordshire had **0.77 knife crimes per 1,000 population** in the 12 months to March 2023, and was **6th (6 of 8 compared to MSF)**. This is comparable to the Most Similar Force average.

Serious violence has decreased by 3% (-369) in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months, and has seen a 30.4% (2,793) increase compared to the national Beating Crime Plan baseline 2019.

Domestic crime has decreased by 10.2% (-2,311) in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months, and has increased by 35.0% (5,281) compared to the national Beating Crime Plan baseline.

Violence against women and girls has seen a 1.1% (230) increase compared to the previous 12 months, and a 70.3% (11,929) increase compared to the national Beating Crime Plan baseline. Recent increases (compared to the previous year) can be seen in non-domestic crimes.

The data shows a big drop in malicious communications, however the Deputy Chief Constable highlighted that some of these incidents are now recorded as stalking and harassment as the focus is on recording the principle or core higher category crime.

Staffordshire Police, together with the Commissioner's Office, local authorities, health trusts, education, Probation and the voluntary sector, have established a 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.

#### 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 Digital Crime and Performance Pack (DCPP), compared to the national baseline 2018/19. Staffordshire had a 4% decrease in the last 12 months compared to the 2018/19 baseline and sits 21<sup>st</sup> out of 42 forces and 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 8 Most Similar Forces.

With the significant risk of modern slavery, county lines and child exploitation drugs activity remain a priority for proactive teams within the force. The force had a successful county lines intensification week in October 2023, with significant successes in tackling the high threat/harm/risk associated with some of the individuals who were arrested and the significant lines which were seized and which have remained closed down, since this enforcement activity.

The Chief was clear about Staffordshire's strong stance against cannabis and cannabis farms, which are not harmless and often act as a precursor to stronger and more harmful drugs, with significant links to modern slavery and trafficking.

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

Staffordshire is using a local proxy measure to measure cybercrime, incorporating cyber-dependent crimes which are managed nationally by the City of London Police. The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) reviews and disseminates investigations to local forces which were recorded by Action Fraud. Cyber-enabled crimes are crimes owned by Staffordshire Police which have a cyber/online element to them. Action Fraud cases are reported to National Action Fraud and some cases are forwarded to Staffordshire Police to investigate. There has been an increase of 17% in Action Fraud cases reported by Staffordshire residents compared to the national baseline in 2019. There has been a 9% decrease in those referred back to Staffordshire to conduct local investigations against the same baseline.

The Chief 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 down. The criminal justice outcomes rate for Action Fraud investigations is 6.9% in the last 12 months to December 2023 and has decreased by 1.1% compared to the previous year. The vast majority (58%) result in a disposal of 'unable to progress the investigation'.

The team has worked to improve the recording of outcomes in the last 18 months which has reduced the outstanding outcomes, so the change in the data could reflect the accurate and timely updating of outstanding crimes meaning more 'no further action' outcomes, rather than the work remaining in officers' trays unresolved. The Commissioner hopes to see this outcome rate improve as the outstanding workload improves to a manageable level.

### 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 has met the ambition of 75% and this metric shows sustained improvement. The Crime validation process is integral to the transfer of victim data to the Victim Gateway support service. The impact of the changes within the Crime and Victims Bureau has led to stabilisation of crime validation.

The volume of crimes recorded in the last 12 months is stable with a 0.2% (+202) increase compared to the previous 12 months, which is now a more accurate reflection of the reported crime in the same period (+2.5%). There is now only a small difference (0.2% or 217 crimes) between the volumes of crime reported and validated in the last 12 months. 84% 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. A reducing percentage (18%) had a more positive view of the police after contact. 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 has reduced over the last 6 months to 71.1% and is recognised as key to improving satisfaction amongst victims and witnesses. Pursuing reasonable lines of enquiry remains the priority for investigations and the force is committed to keeping victims informed so this metric will be monitored for improvement in future meetings.

#### 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 third survey have been analysed and these show an improving public perception of Staffordshire Police compared to June 2022 (before the local policing changes were made). There has not been a further survey since the last Public Performance Meeting in October 2023.

The Commissioner is very keen that the public have confidence in how complaints are handled. In general, there is an upward trend in total cases of dissatisfaction. Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) statistics show that Staffordshire is performing better than our most similar forces around timeliness for complaint handling and response to the public. The force's Professional Standards Department has a dedicated prevent officer to address the key themes of dissatisfaction identified, by providing local policing commanders with relevant data to address performance matters and delivering bespoke inputs around emerging trends and patterns.



## 6.0 Reducing Offending and Reoffending

### 6.1. Outcomes

The criminal justice outcome rate is 13.1% in the last 12 months to December 2023, and is stable (+0.7%) compared to the previous 12 months.

The Commissioner was pleased to hear that in December 2023, the criminal justice outcome rate was **16.7%** or 1,258 outcomes, which included 813 charges/summons, 108 cautions/conditional cautions, and 334 community resolutions, and three TICs (taken into consideration).

Staffordshire ranks **11<sup>th</sup> in the 43 forces** for charge and postal requisition rate to July 2023, and **2<sup>nd</sup> in its 8 most similar forces** at 9.3%.

## 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 (median) time to investigate in Staffordshire is above the national average, with an average (median) of **54 days to record a successful outcome** for a victim-based crime in the latest quarter (Q2 2023) compared to an average (median) of **34 days nationally in the latest quarter (Q2 2023)**.

Compared to similar forces, Staffordshire is not where it needs to be. Investigations taking too long means more potential for people to reoffend. The force is intent on developing clear investigation plans and increasing staff in the Public Protection Unit to boost capacity, with the aim of speeding up investigations. There has been improvement in the last few months, which is mainly down to improving the quality of investigations, increasing supervisory oversight and ensuring every officer gets the support they need to deliver a quality investigation. The additional context around most similar forces and national datasets aids understanding and provides additional reassurance of Staffordshire's current performance, and this will continue to be scrutinised until improvement is sustained.

## 8. Enabling Services: HR & Finance Update

### 8.1. Operation Uplift, Officer Recruitment

The Commissioner reflected that Staffordshire Police are not unique in talking about a more challenging financial situation with increased costs, inflation, and the needs of the capital programme. The Chief noted that Staffordshire is seen as a healthy service financially, with a significant step-up in police officer and staff numbers as promised in the Commissioner's election pledge. However, the Chief's precept request isn't just around demanding more, but becoming a more proactive, improved public service through better contact, better public protection services, better use of Digital Data and Technology and returning to being an outstanding provider. The Commissioner noted that the public want the same thing, which comes across in all conversations he has with residents.

The Commissioner thanked the Chief Officer team for a very useful meeting and closed the session, adding that he hoped he would be back to chair another Public Performance Meeting after the election.