

Commissioner's response to Staffordshire Police Public Performance Report

(incorporating Specified Information Order Statement on national crime and policing measures)

Staffordshire Commissioner Ben Adams' second police Public Performance Meeting took place on 24th May 2022. This was an opportunity to share with the public the progress made since the last public meeting against the Commissioner's and the Chief Constable's vision for policing for the next three years. The Commissioner is keen that the key measures, revisited here three times a year, will demonstrate the progress being made against delivering the service level ambitions in his Police & Crime Plan, as well as the national crime and policing measures (NCPM/national measures) in the government's Beating Crime Plan. Where appropriate, these are highlighted as local priorities or those that form national measures and 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 understands that the national measures remain under consultation through regional groups and the NPCC and is satisfied that where appropriate Staffordshire Police have used local data to demonstrate their current position.

Commissioner Ben Adams reiterated that the public remain concerned about response times when they initially contact the force and, for the minority who find themselves involved in the Criminal Justice System, the timeliness and the fairness of that experience. Ben Adams is clear that there are some areas where Staffordshire need to make more rapid progress.

Chief Constable Chris Noble said that the focus in his first 5 months of appointment has been to listen to communities, staff and partners who have confirmed that his priorities should be strengthening our approach to local policing and staff wellbeing and continuing to develop our approach to vulnerability and supporting communities.

3. A Local and Responsive Service

3.1. Contact and Response: Emergency and Non-Emergency

There has been a continued 20% increase in demand over the last year across emergency calls which has, in part, contributed to frustration and delays in answering non-emergency calls and the associated increases in abandoned calls. The recruitment drives and technological solutions that were planned to improve current service levels by April 2022 onwards have not yet impacted on performance but the Commissioner is assured that this is a priority for the force and there has been an escalation of urgency in the form of a rapid improvement plan which should demonstrate sustained improvements by the end of the year. These plans include an additional 30 staff who are to be recruited in June 2022 although the impact of these will not be felt until October when they are fully trained; leadership has been addressed in the form of a Contact and Operations Chief Superintendent and new Quality Manager, investment in technology and financial support; Accountability, governance and quality of interactions in terms of vulnerability identification and support referrals, crime prevention and risk. In other force areas system improvements have taken two years to come to fruition but the Chief is confident that, following the impact of increased summer demand, by the October PPM we should have a good understanding of performance trajectory. BT 999 call data across all forces in England and Wales are due to be published on police.uk at the end of May and Staffordshire will be in the bottom 10 of those forces providing more evidence of the progress required in this area. The outcome of these plans will continue to be monitored at the Public Performance Meeting.

3.2. Response: Grade 1 and Grade 2

Limitations in Staffordshire Police's current operating model mean that the force is not meeting the response targets it sets itself. This must change. Approximately 50% of emergency (Grade 1) incidents are responded to within 15 minutes and 44% of priority incidents (Grade 2s) within 60 minutes. The new operating model moving from 3 response hubs to 10 hubs will see local policing teams aligned with PCSO's and Specials and will go live on 27th June 2022. The public should see this change after the summer and expect improved visibility and engagement locally, alongside improvements in meeting response targets and improving average response times. This will continue to be monitored here at the Public Performance Meeting.

3.3. Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is reducing year on year and the number of repeat addresses is also reducing (-4% on 2018/2019). Nevertheless, this is a priority for those who live, work and visit Staffordshire and will remain a priority for the force and for the PFCC and local authorities. Local policing teams working alongside community safety partnerships will be key in maintaining these reductions and making Staffordshire a safer place and the Commissioner is committed to improving the consistent use of Community Triggers in hotspot areas where victims experience ASB multiple times. The intention in developing use of Community Triggers is to control demand and demonstrate to victim's that effective work is going on rather than create additional demand.

3.4. Reduce Neighbourhood Crime (NPCM)

Acquisitive crime decreased during the first Covid lockdown (March to July 2020) and although increases have been seen over the summer months, levels are not as high as before Covid. When comparing these volumes to the same period in 2018/2019, there has been a decrease of -28% (-2,952). This has increased slightly from the snapshot at the last public performance meeting but is still well below the national average reductions. The Commissioner will be watching this measure with interest to see if the reduction is maintained through changes to the force operating model and local policing structures.

3.5. Road Safety: Enforcement and Community Speed Watch

This data set has developed since the last public meeting and now demonstrates the activity taking place across uninsured drivers, unsafe vehicles, mobile phone and seatbelt offences as well as speeding offences and drink and drug driving offences. The Deputy Commissioner is very keen to see the impact of the Road Policing Unit back on delivery of road safety activities after a prolonged absence in support of vital response activity and will be monitoring the deliverables discussed at the public performance meeting with interest. As a result of discussions at the last Public Performance Meeting the report now details volunteer activity in the form of the volume of speed awareness letters and the subsequent automatic police visits after a driver receives three speed awareness letters from Community Speed Watch. In addition, some of the future developments discussed at the last public meeting have come to fruition, Staffordshire are on track to have over 75 Community Speed Watch groups by the summer of 2022 and focus group meetings with the volunteers were reinstated in April 2022.

Other future developments will include:

- Increasing the links with Police Community Support Officers to strengthen community engagement.
- Promoting the use of volunteers in policing through Corporate Communications.
- Strengthening partnership working and good practice with neighbouring forces who operate Community Speed Watch.
- Involving Community Speed Watch in more road safety operations with Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Roads Policing Unit and safety camera vans.
- Giving consideration is to providing volunteers with video capability to evidence associated offending.

4. Prevent Harm and Protect People

4.1. Reduce Murder and other Homicide (NPCM)

Murders have a devastating impact on the victim's families and the wider community. Murders across Staffordshire are predominantly committed by people who knew the victim. Staffordshire is not an outlier in national Homicide data from the national Digital Crime and Performance Pack, sitting 26th out of 42 forces for volume of homicides per million using the Homicide Index*. We have experienced a broad range of murders that range from domestic murder, 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 Office of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, 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.

*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 this is used as a benchmark for future progress. Staffordshire continues to demonstrate a reduction in all serious violence crimes* and in excess of the average reductions seen by forces in England and Wales.

The Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG) metric has been updated in this report and both the Domestic Abuse and VAWG measure show an increasing trend. The force has recorded 21,773 crimes of violence against women and girls which is an increase of 11% (+2,113) against a benchmark 2018/2019. City accounts for 35% (7,708) of Staffordshire's violence against women and girls and County accounts for 65% (14,049). Both the Chief and the Commissioner confidently attribute some of this trajectory to increased awareness of acceptable behaviour and victim confidence to report offences to Staffordshire Police.

The Commissioner was pleased to hear about the VAWG strategy and action plan here in Staffordshire which includes the internal "Know the Line" campaign to address police standards and behaviour. The Criminal Justice strand includes a target to avoid keeping victim's mobile phones for longer than 24hrs. The action plan also includes a focus on perpetrators using Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination (MATAC) procedures to assess and plan bespoke interventions to target and disrupt serial perpetrators and/or support them to address their behaviour. Finally, a safety in public places strand encompassing the Safety of Women at Night (SWAN) programme and the 4th Safer Streets funding bid in partnership with the Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner would like to hear about the MATAC progress and success measures at the next Public Performance Meeting.

4.3. Disrupt Drugs Supply and County Lines (NPCM)

Since the last Public Performance Meeting Staffordshire has been identified as an outlier for low levels of recorded drugs crime within the national Digital Crime and Performance pack compared with the national baseline 2018/2019. The cause of the outlier is drugs possession offences with a decrease of -47% (936). A contributing factor to this is the drug offence recording process since the introduction of the new crime recording system. Initially drugs offences are given a temporary drugs code while the drugs are identified through forensic testing. A number of teams are responsible for updating the system and there are a large number of temporary drugs codes that have not been updated. The force will be undertaking a data cleansing exercise and it is estimated once this is completed that the force will not be a national outlier. The Commissioner will look to monitor this at regular force performance meetings and update the public at the next Public Performance Meeting.

4.4. Tackle Cyber Crime (NCPM)

Action Fraud cases have gradually increased over the last three years, whereas investigations vary and have stabilised in the last 16 months. When comparing these volumes to the same period in 2018/2019, there has been an increase of 21% (954) in Action Fraud cases reported by Staffordshire residents and a decrease of -54% (-797) in local Action Fraud investigations. The Commissioner would like to understand this disparity in more detail at the next meeting.

The force is looking to establish a digital search team within its enhanced digital investigation team. This will increase knowledge and provide greater opportunities to seize evidence and be increasingly technically aware at scenes.

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

5. Support Victims and Witnesses

5.1. Victims' Code of Practice Compliance

The force has faced some challenges in relation to the transfer of victims' data to the Staffordshire Victims Gateway; this is completed when the crime is validated in accordance with National Crime Recording Standards/Home Office Counting Rules. This process has deteriorated since the last meeting and is currently taking an average of 23 days against a target of 2 days, although it is recognised that there are some nuances in forwarding details of vulnerable victims in faster time. This is intrinsically linked to the crime validation backlog which is now showing signs of improvement following a peak of 7000 crimes in March 2022. The force has an action plan to see this backlog continue to reduce including the introduction of a dedicated crime validation team and the Commissioner will continue to monitor this progress at performance meetings and update the public at the next public meeting.

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

Locally, the PCC has an ambition to design and implement an end to end Criminal Justice System user survey to increase our knowledge of the public's perception of contact with the police, Crown Prosecution Service and the courts with a view to identifying gaps in provision; continuous improvement opportunities and potentially inform future commissioning. This measure will feature the National Crime Survey of England and Wales and the Commissioner's local survey is in development. Progress will be revisited at future meetings in order to really understand what the public think of their local police force.

5.3. Public Confidence

The complaints dataset has progressed since the last meeting and there is now an appetite to understand the rolling 12-month trends in complaint themes and the organisational learning that has been identified and can be shared. We will also be reviewing the Independent Office for Police Conduct complaints data. These measures will be developed further during force performance meetings and shared with the public at the next public meeting.

6. Reduce Offending and Re-offending

6.1. Outcomes – The Commissioner is particularly interested in managing expectations of the actual number of cases that make it through to prosecution and in Out of Court disposals, conditional discharges and community sentences designed to support people out of criminality and reduce repeat offending rates. This measure will be reviewed in more detail at future meetings.

7. A More Effective Criminal Justice System

7.1. Criminal Justice – Timeliness. The National [Criminal Justice scorecards](#) were published in Autumn 2021 and force level scorecard was available from April 2022. The key headline from our local data set 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 (65 days) is above the national average (39 days). The force is intent on developing clear investigation plans and increasing staff in the Public Protection Unit in order to boost capacity with the aim of speeding up investigations. This measure will be reviewed on a regular basis in order to track progress in bringing this time to investigate closer to the national average. Further work will be done on simplifying some of these measures for the public report.

8. Enabling Services: HR & Finance Update

8.1. Operation Uplift, Officer Recruitment – The Commissioner was pleased to receive a letter from the Home Secretary congratulating Staffordshire on their progress in meeting the government’s Operation Uplift target.

8.2. Finance Update – Staffordshire Police are in a really strong place to invest in the future. The outturn for end of financial year was almost identical to forecast giving confidence to the Commissioner and Chief Constable in being able to plan for future decision making. No-one could have expected the inflation we are facing and this will inevitably impact capital spend.

The public of Staffordshire are getting exceptional value for money in all areas including the core back office functions of the service. This section of the meeting is designed to identify exceptions to the budget and capital spend as they arise and take the opportunity to talk about key investments and keep the public up to date with progress against savings plan which is millions of pounds over the term of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Commissioner would like to thank the Chief Officer team for the informed, educated and professional information provided to the public meeting and for the clear direction about where improvements need to be made. The Commissioner is comfortable with the plans in place and intends to continue to use these forums to share the evidence that performance is moving in the right direction with the public of Staffordshire.

Chief Constable Chris Noble commended his senior officer team for their positive approach to change and dedication to supporting their workforce and the people of Staffordshire.

Commissioner Ben Adams looks forward to seeing the progress the Chief Constable makes over the next period.

The next public performance meeting is Tuesday October 4th 2022, 1pm at the Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford.