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Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Monday 18 November 2024

10:00

Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford

The meeting will be webcast live and archived for 12 months. It can be viewed at the following link: <https://staffordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

John Tradewell
Secretary to the Panel
8 November 2024

Agenda

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of interest**
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2024** (Pages 5 - 14)
4. **Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public** (Pages 15 - 16)

Questions to the Commissioner are invited from members of the public who live or work in Staffordshire. Notice of questions must be received by no later than three clear working days before the Panel meeting. More information on where and how to submit a question can be found at <https://bit.ly/34arVDw>

5. **Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)**

The following decisions have been published on the Commissioners web site since the last meeting of the Panel:

Police and Crime 001 – Custody Healthcare

Police and Crime 002 – Beaconside Centre Lease
Police and Crime 003 – Digital Forensics
Infrastructure
Police and Crime 004 – Chief Constable Contract
Police and Crime 005 – Response Support Unit (City
Local Policing & Force CID Command)
Police and Crime 006 – HQ Strategy Sustainability
Works
Police and Crime 007 – HQ Range Enabling Works

[Decisions - Staffordshire Commissioner](#)

6. **Police and Crime - MTFS Update** (Pages 17 - 30)
7. **Fire and Rescue - MTFS Update** (Pages 31 - 42)
8. **Police & Crime Plan and Fire & Rescue Plan
2024-2028 – Consultation outcomes** (Pages 43 - 56)
9. **Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members**
10. **Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme** (Pages 57 - 58)
11. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

Membership	
Charlotte Atkins	Staffordshire Moorlands
Adrian Bowen	Co-optee
Carol Dean	Tamworth

Gill Heesom (Vice-Chair)	Newcastle-under-Lyme District Council
Majid Khan	Stoke on Trent City Council
Zdzislaw Krupski	East Staffordshire
Angela Loughran	Stafford Borough Council
Vince Merrick	South Staffordshire
Bernard Peters (Chair)	Staffordshire County Council
Dave Robertson	Lichfield
David Williams (CCDC)	Cannock Chase

Notes for Members of the Press and Public

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Recording by Press and Public

Recording (including by the use of social media) by the Press and Public is permitted from the public seating area provided it does not, in the opinion of the chairman, disrupt the meeting.

Minutes of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Meeting held on 30 September 2024

Present: Bernard Peters (Chair)

Attendance	
Charlotte Atkins	Angela Loughran
Gill Heesom (Vice-Chair)	Vince Merrick
Zdzislaw Krupski	David Williams
	Paul Taylor (Substitute)

Also in attendance: Ben Adams and Louise Clayton.

Apologies: Adrian Bowen, Carol Dean, Majid Khan and Dave Robertson

Part One

15. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were reported at the meeting.

16. Minutes of the Panel meeting and Confirmation Hearing held on 24 June 2024

Resolved: That the minutes of the Panel meeting held on 24 June 2024 and the Confirmation hearing held on the same date, be approved and signed by the Chairman.

17. Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)

No decisions had been published since the last meeting.

18. Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public

The Panel considered the questions ask by members of the public and the Commissioners written response.

The Commissioner provided a verbal response to the question from Ms Mallender. This is summarised as: The Commissioner continues to be concerned about the ongoing issues at Walley's Quarry and the impact on local residents. The Commissioner was involved in stakeholder meetings and was updated regularly. He felt that the statement on waste crime was not accurate and to his knowledge the police were not taking any

specific action related to that, other agencies may be more appropriate. The Police were there to protect peoples right to protest and to do so safely and legally. The role of the Commissioner is now well established and provides important local representation, particularly on community safety issues. This could be important in the coming months with the national discussion on Policing and Fire service matters being nationalised. The Commissioner felt that his role included representing local people in a way that would not be possible on a national level.

The Commissioners written response to Mr Stocks questions were attached to the agenda pack.

Resolved: That the questions asked, and the Commissioners responses be noted.

19. Commissioners Annual Report

The Annual Report was presented by the Commissioner who explained the progress made against his Local Police and Crime and Fire and Rescue Plans.

The Commissioner highlighted the following from his report:

- The regrettably lack of progress in some local partnership working, particularly around the wider local criminal justice aspect. He explained that the Commissioners influence was around that of ensuring that the polices response in preparing cases for court and this had seen process. In terms of court backlog, progress had not been as great as had been hoped for. Staffordshire had the second largest backlog in the county. This was challenging and work would continue with other agencies to improve the effectiveness of the system.
- In the main, the Commissioner was pleased with progress and the HMI inspection reports showed improvement. He felt that there was still room for improvement in the Police Service but every area of inspection had improved. The Fire and Rescue service report was viewed as excellent.
- Road safety, including ANPR Cameras, speeding and vehicle crime remained a priority.
- The recruitment target of additional police officers had been met with many now having completed their 3 year training.
- The relationship with the NHS continued to be strengthened.
- The 101 call service continued to be an area of concern.

In addition to the information provided in the written report, the Commissioners presentation and questioning from the Panel provided the following information:

- The work to improve relationships with partners such as the ICB was acknowledged, and it was hoped would continue.
- It was noted that anti-social behaviour had decreased in some areas of the County but not all. Where this problem still existed, the effect on residents was profound.
- Domestic violence remained an issue, particularly where children were involved.
- The training provided to new recruits was explained. It was acknowledged that it was a 3-year programme and dealt with some very complex situations.
- It was also explained that not all new recruits were young, some officers had moved from other roles in the force or PCSO's and brought with them a considerable amount of knowledge and experience.
- There was a pilot in the Stoke on Trent area on domestic violence, which included controlling behaviour. More information would be sent to the panel when available.
- Information on the gender balance for both new recruits and the force (both Fire and Police) was requested.
- The 'New Era' service, provided support to all sectors of the community before police intervention was needed. This was funded in partnership with Local Authorities and the Commissioner.
- IT fraud was an issue both nationally and locally.
- The increased number of attacks on police officers was raised as a concern. Personal protection was one of the first skills taught to new recruits and was a priority for the force. Recent incidents would be reviewed to ensure that everything was being done to protect officers.
- Visible policing was discussed. The Commissioner felt that visible and effective policing was not necessarily the same thing and that sometimes visible policing meant that officers were being pulled away from other work.
- The Commissioner informed the Panel that the inspection reports for both Fire and Rescue and Police had shown improvements. There was some anxiety over funding for the next few years which meant that the link between value for money and productivity was increasingly important. The results of the recent inspections were listed in the report later on the agenda and could be found on the Commissioners website.
- Local officer stability was raised, with officer turnover being viewed locally as an issue. The Commissioner felt that this was less of a problem now than it had been in the past and that it could be viewed as a positive as officers were being promoted and taking with them valuable experience and knowledge of the local area.

New officers also provided an opportunity for new ideas and ways of working.

- The 3-crew fire response service was still being piloted for on call crews. These were normally used as a backup response and wouldn't normally be expected to be working alone. The Commissioner explained that the aim was to get to incidents quicker and provide support. The results of the pilot were not prejudged but the service was provided in consultation with staff and crews and appeared to be well received and had improved officer retention and recruitment. Crews of 3 would not normally tackle fires however, there had been one incident recently where the crew had made a decision to enter a burning building. This decision had been based on their own professional judgement and their safety evaluation. This was not normally the standard response however, it had saved lives. The incident was being reviewed to ensure that officers safety was not compromised. It was acknowledged that the Fire service Unions were concerned over what was called the "moral dilemma" where officers may feel obliged to respond and can go against safety protocol. The aim of the pilot was to make safe the situation until a larger crew attended. The results of the pilot, including the impact, if any, on mental health of the crews would come to the panel in due course.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be received.
- b) That the Panel respond formally to the Annual report including the feedback provided during the meeting.
- c) The Panel requested information on the gender balance for both new recruits and the force(s) as a whole (both Fire and Police).
- d) More information was requested on the pilot in the Stoke on Trent area on responding to domestic violence.
- e) The results of the 3-crew pilot, including the impact, if any, on mental health of the crews, be considered by the panel in due course.

20. Development of the Police & Crime Plan and the Fire & Rescue Plan 2024-2028

The Commissioner introduced his report which provided the Panel with an update on the Police and Crime Plan and the Fire and Rescue Plan. The plans were for the period 2024 – 2028 and were currently draft and out for consultation. The report summarised the consultation process.

The Commissioner reminded the Panel whilst the plans did not direct the service operations, they did reflect local issues and both the Chief Constable, and the Chief Fire Officer had been consulted and took the

plans into account when planning the delivery of their service.

Following the Commissioners introduction, the Panel asked questions, and the following information was gathered. This was in addition to that provided in the written report:

- Knife crime was a concern to the public however it was reported that a large proportion of incidents were domestic and not attacks on strangers in the street.
- Battery fires, including electric scooters was a national issue and needed some guidance from central government.
- Climate changes and the challenges and demands on the Fire Service due to the need to respond to fires and floods was raised. The Commissioner agreed to relook at this in the plan to ensure that enough priority was placed on it. It was acknowledged that tackling flooding required a partnership approach which included prevention work such as gully maintenance, house building plans, drainage etc.
- The Anti-Social Behaviour pilot which involved wardens with increased powers working with police was still on going.
- Police officer attendance at resident meeting was important and should happen but other priorities meant that this was not always possible. Members were asked to inform the Commissioner if nonattendance happened on a regular basis.
- The consultation timeline and public responses to date was noted. Some members reported that they did not recall receiving information on the consultation and had struggled to find it on social media. The Commissioner agreed to look at the way elected members were consulted.

Resolved: That the Police and Crime Plan and the Fire and Rescue Plan update report be noted.

21. Fire Safety Plan 2020 - 2024 Update

The Commissioner introduced his report which provided the Panel with an update on the Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan which included the Community Risk Management Plan. The report set out the Commissioners priorities and progress to date.

It was felt that a number of questions asked under previous reports had related to the safety plan and so were not repeated. This included the 3-crew pilot.

It was noted that the latest HMICFRS inspection had updated some of the information in the report. The inspection report could be found on the Commissioners website.

Resolved: That the Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan update report

was noted.

22. Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members

There was a statement made that the partnership working was very encouraging and the best way to try to solve some of the issues facing the county.

23. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme

The Panels next meeting would be held on 18 November 2024.

Resolved: That the work programme be noted.

Chair

STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

NOTE: The following action or information was requested at a previous meeting(s). When an item has been completed it will be reported to the Panel and then taken off the list.

Meeting / Agenda Item	Action Required	By Whom	Information requested/action taken	Completed or Target date
6 Feb 2023 Questions raised by the Panel. Page 11	Minute 23 When would the incompatibility of technology be rectified? Reference was made to CCTV data from the District Councils which could not be downloaded by the police.	PFCC to respond	This matter is being considered by the Police. Ongoing Also discussed at 3 July meeting. (Minute 7) and update provided under (Minute 32) 5 February 2024.	
13 November 2023 – MTFS -Police	Minute 26 Requested that future budget/MTFS update reports include appendices covering the Capital programme and detailed lines in the budget should be included.	PFCC	Will be included in the update report November 2024	08/11/2024
13 November 2023 – MTFS Fire	Minute27 Requested that future budget/MTFS update reports include appendices covering the Capital programme and detailed lines in the budget should be included.	PFCC	Will be included in the update report November 2024	08/11/2024

<p>1. 1. 13 November 2023 – MTFS Fire</p> <p>2. 12 February 2024 – Fire and Rescue action plan</p> <p>3. 30 September 2024 – annual report</p>	<p><u>Crew of 3 trial</u></p> <p>Minute 27 The results of the crew of three trail, be reported to the Panel when available.</p> <p>Minute 43 That more information on the three person crewing for on call staff be reported back to the panel, and include responses to the Panels questions/concerns as listed above.</p> <p>Minute 21 The results of the 3-crew pilot, including the impact, if any, on mental health of the crews, be considered by the panel in due course.</p>	PFCC	<p>Also discussed at 12 February meeting and 30 September meeting.</p> <p>Briefing note sent to members 09/10/24. Pilot due to end December 2024.</p>	<p>Included in the Fire and Rescue plan or annual report (September 2024).</p> <p>Results in due course.</p>
<p>22 February 2024 – Police misconduct annual report</p>	<p>Minute 44 The Panel felt that although benchmarking information was available on line, it would be useful in future, if comparison information could be added to the report. Also examples of how complaints had helped to improve organisational learning.</p>	PFCC	<p>Annual report for Force and Fire will be presented at the Panel meeting in February 2025</p>	<p>February 2025</p>
<p>24 June 2024 – Decisions taken by the PFCC</p>	<p>The Commissioner agreed to review the proforma to link the decision made back to his strategic plan or other relevant plan.</p>	PFCC		
<p>30 September 2024 –</p>	<p>That the Panel respond formally to the Annual report including the feedback provided during the meeting.</p>	Panel	<p>Responded 09/10/24. Website</p>	<p>October 2024</p>

Annual report				
30 September 2024 - Annual report <div>Page 13</div>	<p>The Panel requested information on the gender balance for both new recruits and the force(s) as a whole (both Fire and Police).</p>	<p>PFCC</p>	<p>Police figures in performance monitoring report 07/10/24 COMMISSIONER'S PUBLIC PERFORMANCE MEETING - STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE - Tuesday 23 January 2024, 2:00pm - Staffordshire County Webcasting (public-i.tv)</p> <p>Fire information emailed to members and will be part of the fire performance pack 7 November <u>Public Meetings - Staffordshire Commissioner (staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk)</u></p>	<p>Pages 32 & 33 Fire PPM document - provided 08/11/2024</p>
30 September 2024 - Annual report	<p>More information was requested on the pilot in the Stoke on Trent area on responding to domestic violence.</p>	<p>PFCC</p>	<p>Will be emailed when available</p>	

**STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL –
18 November 2024**

**QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC TO THE POLICE, FIRE AND
CRIME COMMISSIONER**

Report of the Secretary

The Panel's Constitution provides for questions to the Commissioner from members of the public. Questioners can choose to either attend the meeting and ask the question themselves or have the question dealt with in written form and the reply forwarded to them.

J Tradewell
Secretary to the Panel

Contact Officers: Mandy Pattinson
Mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk

1. G Jones – Support Staffordshire

According to a report submitted to the Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board on 24 October 2024, the Staffordshire Commissioner has no data on how many adults known to Local Authority safeguarding teams to be at risk of domestic abuse, have received support from the commissioned provider, New Era, prior to April 2024. This is a serious negation of the Commissioners responsibilities. Please can the commissioner explain why this omission occurred, being specific as to whether this was a provider failure, or a commissioner failure, and being clear about what action has been taken against the organisation or persons responsible for this egregious error?



Item No. on Agenda

Report to the Police Fire and Crime Panel – 18th November 2024

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Current MTFS Update

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the Current Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This supports delivery of one of the Commissioner's key responsibilities under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The report sets out the following:

- Update to current year's budget
- Update to future years' MTFS assumptions
- Sensitivity analysis around key financial items
- Update on capital programme

Recommendations

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is asked to note the information contained within this updated MTFS report.

Ben Adams
Staffordshire Commissioner

Contact Officers:

John Bloomer
Director of Resources (S151 Officer for Staffordshire Police)
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David Greensmith
Director of Finance (S151 Officer for the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office)
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Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the current MTFS covering the years 2024/25 to 2027/28 including an update on the fiscal landscape facing policing since the MTFS was approved and current year financial performance.
- 1.2 The MTFS for the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner following presentation to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 5th February 2024.
- 1.3 This MTFS report provides an update to the assumptions within the report and outlines key pressures facing the group.
- 1.4 As part of the budget process for 2025/26, the MTFS will be continually updated, up until the budget proposal by the Commissioner (and endorsement of the precept for Policing and Crime by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel), on 3rd February 2025.
- 1.5 A high-level timetable is included in this report, to lay out the necessary steps and key meetings to communicate the 2025/26 budgeting process and updated MTFS.
- 1.6 At the time of producing the budget for 2024/25, Staffordshire Police was in the 'engaged' phase of monitoring by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) based on their inspection in June 2022. The Inspectorate removed Staffordshire Police from the enhanced monitoring on 21st May 2024 following improvements in its service.
- 1.7 Staffordshire Police's August 2024 Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection showed the force to be one of the most improved forces in the country over the Inspectorate's latest inspection programme. Maintaining this course of improvement is essential and a key commitment of the Commissioner, however, is set against a backdrop of uncertainty both in relation to future funding and Government policy.
- 1.8 The Commissioner has continued to support the Chief Constable in investing in Policing locally. This includes; additional officers above and beyond those funded in the February 2024 MTFS, a new team to tackle rural crime, technology to improve contact services and free up officer time as well as an enhanced road crime team. More detail in in section 3.3
- 1.9 The Commissioner asks the panel to note the current high level of financial uncertainty in regards to emerging government policy around policing. For example, there is an assumption in the Autumn 2024 budget that the governments Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee can be funded by internal efficiencies in addition to closing the existing budget gap whilst ringfencing both Police Officer and PCSO numbers. Beyond this no further information, at the time of writing, has emerged and presents a challenge to the completeness of the business planning cycle.

The Budget Setting Process and Savings/Pressure Review

- 2.1 Financial and budget planning work is undertaken jointly with the Chief Constable to identify pressures and savings, as well as identifying areas for potential new investment in the policing model, should funding be available to do so.
- 2.2 The table below outlines the proposed budget timetable for the 2025/26 MTFS:

Date	Activity
June 2024	Resource Allocation Challenge panels (savings targets)
August 2024	Staffordshire Commissioner's Office MTFS review (including savings identification)
August 2024	Review capital programme commences
September 2024	TOM v budget reconciliation and recalculation of pay budgets
September 2024	Revised MTFS position based on recalculation of pay budgets and known pressures/savings to date
September 2024	Command review of current MTFS
September 2024	Review inflation assumptions
September 2024	Review reserves position
End September/ Beginning October	Resource Allocation Challenge panels (to present the pressures, flag any risks and Priority Based Resourcing review)
30 th October 2024	Autumn Statement
November	Resource Allocation Challenge panels (further review and Priority Based Resourcing panels)
18 th November 2024	Police Fire & Crime Panel – MTFS Update
December 2024	Presentation of draft budget requirement to the Commissioner
December 2024	Refine detailed budgets
December 2024	Finalise capital programme
December 2024	Funding settlement
December 2024	Launch Public Consultation regarding precept
Mid-January 2025	Final Council Tax Precept Positions from districts
January 2025	Draft Panel report – presentation to SGB on 25/01/2025 (Finance Panel on 31/01/2025)
3 rd February 2025	Police Fire & Crime Panel – Recommendation of the budget and precept decision

- 2.3 A review of the capital programme is underway, with this currently showing a reduction in forecast capital spend over the life of the MTFS period, with resulting capital financing savings.
- 2.4 As part of the above process, Staffordshire Police will hold budget holder 'Resource Allocation and Challenge panels. These sessions, led by the Chief Constable, will challenge command leads around areas for new savings derived from the use of HMICFRS and CIPFA benchmarking where levels of funding and outcomes do not align. The Force is continuing its Priority Based Resourcing (PBR) reviews across a handful of areas to provide further scrutiny and greater understanding of use of resources. These reviews provide opportunities to review service levels and identify savings.

2.5 The savings challenge of £5.9m (post the use of earmarked reserves) for 2025/26 represents just over 2% of that overall budget, however there are a number of constraints placed on where savings can be found;

- Nationally police officer numbers are ringfenced (over 50% of the budget is spent just on police officer salaries);
- Locally, contact (call handlers) numbers are ringfenced;
- The majority of non-pay costs are linked to headcount ergo by ringfencing headcount this ringfences this spend; and,
- Fees and charges are nationally set.

The result of this is that savings have to be made on a much smaller base, with around 75% of the base budget ringfenced fully or in part. The reality is that with these constraints it is unavoidable that over the MTFS period police staff headcount will need to be reduced and capital programmes contained to minimise increases in borrowing costs.

2.6 To aid the planning process the following strategic guidelines have been set out within which planning will be undertaken:

- That the current police officer baseline is as a minimum maintained at 2,000fte
- Back office support services will reduce as a share of the overall budget over the life of the MTFS ensuring more funding is directed to front line service delivery
- Where possible, the capital programme will be funded from internal borrowing
- The overall capital programme will not grow from the amounts allocated for the years in the 2024/25 MTFS with new additions being offset by reductions elsewhere
- The General Fund Reserve Balance will be maintained, where possible, to support the ability to internally borrow and provide stability
- Savings will be sought from increased efficiency; income generation or non-pay spend within Staffordshire Police and redundancies avoided where possible
- A commitment to avoid 'cost shunting' between local partners
- To explore further collaboration opportunities both locally, regionally, and nationally and in particular with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Local Context and updated Financial Position 2024/25

3.1 At the time of producing the budget for 2024/25, Staffordshire Police was in the 'engaged' phase of monitoring by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) based on their inspection in June 2022. The Inspectorate removed Staffordshire Police from the enhanced monitoring on 21st May 2024 following improvements in its service.

3.2 Staffordshire Police's August 2024 Police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) inspection showed the force to be one of the most improved forces over the Inspectorate's latest programme. Maintaining this course of improvement is essential and a key commitment of the Commissioner, however, is set against a backdrop of uncertainty both in relation to future funding and Government policy.

3.3 The Commissioner and Chief Constable are committed to the continuing improvement of the force's performance and as such the Commissioner has supported investment in to,

and secured additional funding for, areas that the public have told him are important to making Staffordshire a great place to live, work and visit. These investments since the budget was presented to panel on 5th February 2024 are:

- Recruitment of transferees, bringing experience at pace into Staffordshire Police to complement our existing recruitment of student officers;
- Additional technologies to improve public contact and feedback;
- Automated document redaction software to ensure legislative compliance with Crown Prosecution Service requirements is automated, freeing up time to be reinvested back into Policing;
- A dedicated proactive team to tackle important priorities in rural communities;
- A new specialist Roads Crime Team to tackle crime committed on our road networks and help make them safer;
- A new Response Support Unit across Stoke-on-Trent City to improve service and victim experience, expected to go-live next year. The Unit consists of 16 additional Officers (taking headcount to 2,016fte) funded for two years.

- 3.4 The Group (Commissioner and Staffordshire Police) outturn forecast for the current year at the end of Quarter 2 is £264.618m. This is a positive variance of £0.193m (0.07%) against the annual net revenue budget of £264.811m. The detailed revenue position as at Quarter 2 is set out at Appendix 1.
- 3.5 As at Q2 the revised capital programme is £25.1m for 2024/25 and includes planned spend across Information Technology, Transport, Estates and Equipment. The outline capital programme for each area is set out at Appendix 2.
- 3.6 During the Summer, Staffordshire experienced significant disorder, which resulted in the mobilisation of specialist public order officers. Whilst there is a cost to the force to resource the disorder, there is an additional on-going cost to support the investigation and damages claims; the total cost of which is expected to cost c.£2m. The National Police Chief's Council and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners are working closely with the Home Office to ensure that forces are appropriately reimbursed.

Review of MTFS 2024/25

- 4.1 Both the Commissioner and Staffordshire Police are reviewing current planned revenue savings, pressures, proposed priority investments and capital spend. This work has been undertaken over the months of September and October and has identified the following high-level revenue budget changes:
- Due to the underspend across the group in 2023/24, the requirement to support in-year spend from the budget support reserve was removed. As this has been the case, this has afforded the opportunity to increase the use of the budget support reserve in to £4.117m; this additional funding has been applied in 2026/27 (£0.472m).
 - The pay award for September 2024 was higher than budgeted, which has had an on-going impact to future years. In addition, given the uncertainty regarding the

level of pay awards in future years, the 2025/26 assumption has been increased from 2% to 3% and remains at 2% thereafter in line with future inflation estimates.

- In recognition of the funding pressures faced by forces following the pay award of 4.75% in September 2024, the Home Office has provided £175m of additional funding. Whilst the exact amount to be received hasn't been confirmed, Staffordshire's anticipated share of the 2025/26 pay award grant has been included and assumes that it fully funds the pay pressure. The table below shows pay pressures compared to the original MTFS assumption totalling £4m that are offset by a pay award grant of £4m.
- The increase in the employer national insurance contributions and change to the NI free threshold will add c.£3.9m to the group's costs. On the basis that the Government has stated that it will fund this cost increase for public sector bodies, this has been assumed net nil. Given that the detail around exact funding is awaited, there remains a risk that the funding will be insufficient depending on how the additional funding is calculated and distributed.
- However, national insurance pressures on suppliers are not funded; this is likely to result in an increased inflation figure for the force to budget for in relation to non-pay costs as our working assumption is suppliers will seek to pass this on.
- National pressures have been reflected as follows: additional costs to be incurred following the classification of the XL Bully dog being a prohibited type of dog under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, the Government's commitment to the Triple Lock on pensions, resulting in an additional pressure above assumptions on officer injury pensions and increases to Home Office IT charges.
- A review of the capital programme has identified capital financing savings of £0.4m. This forms part of the force's efficiency programme with a target of £0.5m to be found.
- Investment income is forecast to be at higher rates for longer, resulting in increased returns.
- Additional new permanent savings identified to date and reflected in the table below are bank holiday supervision review (£0.158m), Estates running costs (£0.117m). Work continues to in relation to realising further savings to close the budget gap – see para 4.11.
- On-going revenue costs associated with investments including control room technology, automated document redaction software and dashcams and telematics.

- 4.2 The table below shows the forecast movement in the MTFS position since the MTFS was set in February 2024 for the changes indicated above:

	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Underlying position (after use of earmarked reserves)	(9.5)	(14.3)	(19.0)
<i>Reserve movements</i>	3.6	0.0	0.0
Reported budget gap February 2024	(5.9)	(14.3)	(19.0)
<i>Additional use of budget support reserve</i>	0.0	0.5	0.0
<i>Pay pressures arising from pay award at 4.75%</i>	(4.0)	(4.1)	(4.1)
<i>Pay award grant</i>	4.0	4.1	4.1
<i>Pay award review (for 2025/26)</i>	(1.7)	(2.9)	(3.0)
<i>National Pressures</i>	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)
<i>Changes to capital financing</i>	0.4	0.0	0.0
<i>Additional investment income</i>	0.2	0.1	0.1
<i>Command Savings</i>	0.3	0.3	0.3
<i>Investments</i>	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.5)
Revised (Gap)	(7.6)	(17.3)	(22.6)

- 4.3 The table below shows the changes in assumptions based on the MTFS set in February 2024, compared to the changes assumed in the table above:

Category		2025/26 %	2026/27 %	2027/28 %
Pay award	MTFS	2.00	2.00	2.00
	Revised	3.00	2.00	2.00
General non-pay inflation	MTFS	2.00	2.00	2.00
	No change	2.00	2.00	2.00

- 4.4 As set out above, there is a risk that due to the increases in national contributions, suppliers will seek to pass this on. Each 1% increase in non-pay inflation equates to a pressure of c.£0.5m.
- 4.5 The position shown above retains the assumption of the capitalisation of a number of new posts across the Digital Data and Technology department; this will be reviewed with a view to reducing the need to capitalise these posts should the budget allow.
- 4.6 A detailed review of the pay budget will be undertaken as it is anticipated that due to an increase in leavers since the 2024/25 MTFS was set, there will be a reduction in the budget requirement. The difference between a PC at the bottom and top of the scale is c.£27k, which becomes material over a number of posts. The current position also assumes that the Government will fund the impact of the incremental drift of officers as they reach the higher spinal column points where the cost jumps significantly.

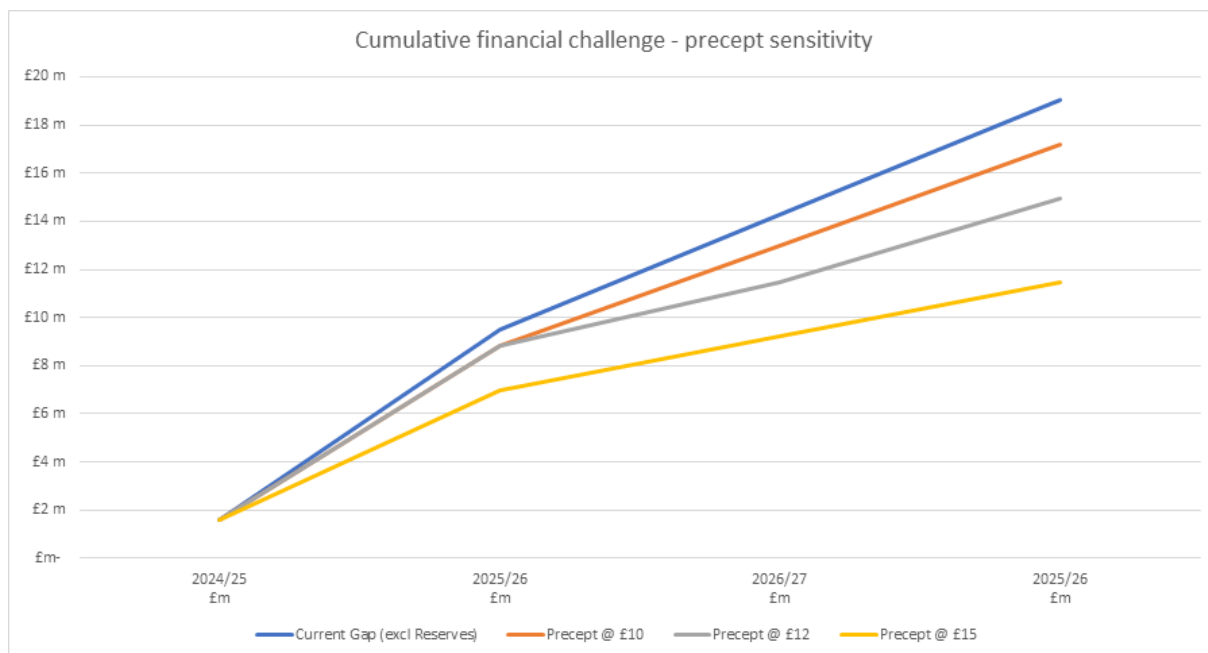
- 4.7 The position shown above assumes a precept increase of 2.99% in 2025/26, which equates to a £8.18 increase on a band D property, which is what was assumed in the approved MTFS in February 2024.
- 4.8 The 2024/25 MTFS assumed a use of the budget support reserve in years 2024/25 to 2025/26. This assumption has been maintained in the figures presented above.
- 4.9 Whilst using the budget support reserve remains available to use over the life of the MTFS the usage of the reserve needs to be balanced against a number of factors. These factors include using the reserve to smooth out the incremental savings requirement or allowing for targeted one-off investment.
- 4.10 In addition to the above, panel should note that whilst the uplift in police officer numbers mandated by central government is welcome, in essence this 'ring fences' well over half the budget from efficiency savings and redesigns. This means that in relation to savings on employment costs these can only come from police staff and PCSO roles.
- 4.11 The force has a comprehensive efficiency plan which covers 4 pillars: productivity, procurement, income generation and staffing/service levels. This alongside the Resource Allocation Challenge panels has identified savings opportunities totalling c.£4m.

Income Assumptions

- 5.1 The Commissioner receives funding from a number of sources with the majority of this being through core Home Office funding and the Council Tax precept. Income assumptions are currently being reviewed as part of the MTFS process; the Police funding settlement is usually received in December.
- 5.2 A three-year spending review (SR21) was set out alongside the Chancellor's budget announcements on the 27th October 2021; the 2024/25 MTFS was the final year of this period. In 2025/26, it is assumed that core funding will increase by 2% and by 2.5% thereafter.
- 5.3 On 30th October, the Chancellor delivered her Autumn Budget, during which she stated that core grant will increase for police forces in the settlement to help support frontline policing levels across the country and help deliver 13,000 more neighbourhood police officers and PCSOs. However, the amount by which the settlement will increase is not specified, therefore no changes have been made to the assumptions in the update.
- 5.4 Demand pressures on existing business and investment in service enhancements may need to be funded through increases in precept, savings or additional income being sourced.
- 5.5 The Government is likely to continue with the previous Government's policy to afford additional precept flexibility above the level currently assumed as a means of funding policing nationally. The Commissioner will balance the needs of policing for additional funding against the ability of Staffordshire residents to afford the policing precept; the current assumption in 2025/26 is an increase of 2.99%.

5.6 Should the Government grant the same flexibility as the previous Spending Review of £10 per annum for a band D property, this equates to 3.66% and would reduce the budget gap by £0.676m in 25/26. Should the Government announce precept flexibilities greater than this, the impact of an increase of £12 would be additional funding of £1.4m and an increase of £15 would be £2.5m. There was no detail on this in the Autumn Budget, with this expected in the Provisional Settlement in December.

5.7 The chart below sets out the impact of changes in precept funding on the budget gap.



5.8 The impact of the on-going challenges on our council tax base is unknown. An assumption of a 1.5% increase in the council tax base is included within the position as well as a surplus on the collection fund of £0.650m.

5.9 For 2024/25, the group received a ring-fenced Uplift maintenance grant (£6.4m) and an additional recruitment top-up grant (£1.824m). The funding position assumes that these grants have been baselined and will increase by 2% in line with the assumptions around core grant. This is a risk item.

5.10 Other grants such as legacy Council Tax support and Pensions Grant are assumed to continue at the current levels and are not increased by inflation representing real terms cut.

Inflation Assumptions and Sensitivity

6.1 Once again, the MTFs refresh is being undertaken in an uncertain environment as a result of the cost of living crisis and levels of high inflation.

6.2 Funding assumptions both in relation to local and national funding are likely to cause material changes late on in the planning process. This cannot be avoided but needs to be recognised.

6.3 The table below sets out the budget assumptions presented to the panel for the 2024/25 MTFS:

Description	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate
<u>Police Officers</u>				
Pay Award	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Incremental uplift	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Pension Contribution	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%
<u>Police Staff</u>				
Pay Award	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Incremental uplift	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Pension Contribution	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%
<u>Non Pay Inflation</u>				
General	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Utilities & Fuel*	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
<u>Funding & Income</u>				
Government Funding	8.84%	1.50%	2.0%	2.5%
Council Tax Base Increase	1.55%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Variable Income Charges	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Council Tax Precept Increase	4.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%

* % increase stated is an average across budgets

6.4 Consumer Prices Inflation is running at 1.7% in the 12 months to September 2024, down from 2.2% in August 2024. It is anticipated to remain at this level for the remainder of the MTFS period and this is within budgeted tolerance.

6.5 The non-pay inflation assumption for 2025/26 has been kept at 2% given the current projections.

6.6 The current MTFS assumes pay awards at 2% per annum for 2025/26. For planning purposes, the assumption reflected in this MTFS update is an increase to 3% in light of the new Government's departure from public sector pay award restraint.

6.7 For indicative purposes, the table below from the 2024/25 MTFS highlights the impact of changes to the MTFS position:

Cost Area	Change	£'000
Police Pay	1%	1,312
PCSO/Police Staff	1%	839
Utilities	1%	28
Vehicle costs	1%	40
Supplies & Services	1%	102
Police Pension Contribution	1%	862
Police Core Grant Funding	1%	1,376
Precept	£1	366
Precept	1%	1,001

Capital

- 7.1 As part of the current MTFS refresh, capital plans across both Staffordshire Police and the Commissioner's Office are being refreshed.
- 7.2 The Commissioner has set a desire to see greater economy and efficiency being obtained from infrastructure investment. This includes the benefits arising from such investment both in terms of productivity gain but also cashable savings. This will be a key theme for the Commissioner in agreeing the 2025/26 capital programme.
- 7.3 The Commissioner will repay £1.6m of loans funded by the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) in the 2024/25 year. No new loans will be taken out in year with the capital programme funded from a mix of revenue contributions, capital receipts and internal borrowing. By not replacing these loans the Commissioner will continue to make savings on interest payments.
- 7.4 External debt, held in the form of Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) debt has decreased again this year.
- 7.5 In light of the current increased PWLB rates, the planning assumption is that the capital programme will be funded from internal borrowing as far as possible.
- 7.6 The current interest rate environment does not support locking in long term borrowing, given PWLB rates are running at 5%. Whilst there is no immediate need to borrow in the current year, by adopting a stance of only borrowing internally, the Commissioner will be strongly placed to either avoid these high borrowing costs, or to seek to borrow when market conditions allow over the life of the MTFS.
- 7.7 In addition to the above, the current internal cash balances are earning a significantly higher rate of return than budgeted. In the immediate coming year this will, based on current rates, earn c.£0.6m of new investment income to offset some of the pressures the group is facing.

Reserves

- 8.1 The General Fund reserve is £9.636m, which is 3.64% of the 2024/25 net revenue budget in line with the Commissioner's Reserves Strategy, with no forecast draw on this reserve in year anticipated.
- 8.2 Earmarked reserves are held for specific purposes. As part of the MTFS refresh process both Section 151 Officers will review the adequacy and intended use of these reserves with a view to providing support to the MTFS.
- 8.3 A budget support reserve was established in 2021/22. The projected balance of this at the year-end is £4.117m following budgeted use of £1.634m in 2024/25. The current MTFS assumed a draw down of £3.645m in 2025/26; due to not requiring the budgeted draw down from the reserve in 2023/24, £0.472m has been made available to support the budget in 2026/27.

- 8.4 Reserves overall, when benchmarked against the wider sector, remain in line.
- 8.5 Reserves, whilst set aside for a particular purpose, are utilised in cash terms to support capital spend in lieu of external borrowing. The mid-year Treasury Management update indicated that by internally funding from cash in lieu of borrowing has saved the Commissioner around £600 in interest payments so far, this financial year. This figure is minimal due to the average interest rates received on investments only being fractionally below the average borrowing rate (5.16% compared with 5.17%). A full year figure will be reported in the 2024/25 outturn report.

Appendix 1 – Detailed Revenue Position as at Quarter 2 2024/25

	Year to date			Forecast		
	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Pay						
Police Officer Pay Costs	66,567	67,703	1,136	134,897	136,137	1,240
PCSO Pay Costs	4,448	4,402	(46)	8,781	8,643	(137)
Police Staff Pay Costs	36,728	36,466	(262)	76,256	75,621	(634)
Other Employee Costs	2,571	2,686	115	5,075	5,226	151
Police Officer Pensions	2,127	1,772	(355)	4,253	4,139	(114)
	112,442	113,030	588	229,261	229,766	505
Non Pay						
Repairs & Maintenance	22	36	15	44	52	9
Other Premises Costs	3,195	3,049	(145)	6,677	6,450	(227)
Vehicle Costs	2,304	2,505	200	4,596	4,514	(82)
Other Travel Costs	373	366	(7)	745	750	5
Operational Supplies & Service	3,814	3,313	(501)	7,465	7,870	405
Communications & Computers	6,750	6,196	(554)	13,690	12,821	(869)
Administration	1,071	856	(215)	2,536	2,335	(201)
Other Supplies & Services	153	296	142	895	898	3
	17,682	16,616	(1,066)	36,648	35,691	(957)
Contracted						
Third Party Payments	10,541	9,058	(1,483)	20,303	20,791	488
	10,541	9,058	(1,483)	20,303	20,791	488
Capital Financing						
Capital Financing Costs	7,331	6,630	(701)	8,098	7,591	(507)
	7,331	6,630	(701)	8,098	7,591	(507)
Income						
Grants & Contributions	(5,764)	(4,407)	1,357	(14,782)	(15,261)	(479)
Reimbursements	(3,214)	(3,251)	(37)	(6,223)	(6,740)	(517)
Sales, Fees & Charges	(659)	(741)	(83)	(1,334)	(1,296)	38
Other Income	(775)	(1,221)	(447)	(1,549)	(1,598)	(49)
	(10,411)	(9,620)	791	(23,888)	(24,895)	(1,007)
Funding						
Reserve Transfers	(591)	1,323	1,914	(5,549)	(4,325)	1,223
	(591)	1,323	1,914	(5,549)	(4,325)	1,223
Unallocated Savings						
Unallocated Savings	(83)	0	83	(61)	0	61
	(83)	0	83	(61)	0	61
Total Revenue Budget	136,911	137,037	126	264,811	264,618	(193)

Appendix 2 – Quarter 2 Capital Programme

Portfolio	Approved Capital Programme 2024/25 £000	Budget Reprofiled from 2023/24 £000	Restated Capital Programme 2024/25 £000	In Year Changes to Programme £000	Revised Capital programme £000	Total Spend to Date £000	Capital Programme Remaining £000
IT	11,258	2,069	13,327	(1,394)	11,934	5,537	6,397
Estates	14,313	1,080	15,393	(7,074)	8,319	4,221	4,098
Transport	2,075	1,132	3,207	218	3,425	3,247	178
Equipment	1,378	57	1,435	0	1,435	1,088	308
Total Capital Programme	29,024	4,338	33,362	(8,250)	25,113	14,132	10,981

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<u>Capital Funding 2024/25</u>	Approved Capital Funding 2024/25 £000	Funding Reprofiled from 2023/24 £000	Restated Capital Funding 2024/25 £000	In Year Changes to Capital Funding £000	Revised Capital Funding 2024/25 £000
Grants	0	0	0	(200)	(200)
Revenue Contribution to Capital	(2,257)	0	(2,257)	0	(2,257)
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	0	0
Earmarked Reserves	(1,072)	0	(1,072)	(218)	(1,290)
Internal Borrowing Requirement	(25,695)	(4,338)	(30,033)	8,668	(21,366)
Total Capital Programme	(29,024)	(4,338)	(33,362)	8,250	(25,113)



Item No. on Agenda

Report to the Police Fire and Crime Panel

18 November 2024

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Current MTFS Update (Fire)

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the Current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This supports delivery of one of the Commissioner's key responsibilities under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The report sets out the following:

- Update to current year's budget
- Update to future years' MTFS assumptions
- Sensitivity analysis around key financial items
- Update on capital programme

Recommendations

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is asked to note the information contained within this updated MTFS report

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Staffordshire Commissioner

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Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the current MTFS covering the years 2024/25 to 2028/29 including an update on the fiscal landscape facing the Fire and Rescue Service, current year financial performance and reviews the future assumptions for pay and inflation and also future funding.
- 1.2 The MTFS for the five-year period 2024/25 to 2028/29 was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner following presentation to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 12 February 2024. For the first time in a number of years the approved MTFS included a broadly balanced position into the medium term.
- 1.3 Following the budget and precept presentation to the Panel in February, the Commissioner approved a 2.99% increase in Council Tax (£2.52 per annum) in line with the 3% referendum limit.
- 1.4 This MTFS report provides an update on the financial position beyond 2024/25 which includes updates on pay pressure, costs and areas of investment.
- 1.5 As part of the budget process for 2025/26 the MTFS will be updated as further information becomes available and assumptions become more certain, up until the confirmation of the budget proposal by the Commissioner (and endorsement of the precept for Fire by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel), on 10 February 2025.
- 1.6 A high-level timetable is included in this report, to lay out the necessary steps and key meetings to communicate the 2025/26 budgeting process and updated MTFS.
- 1.7 The Staffordshire Commissioner is committed to ensuring that the Service continues to develop its transformation plan in order to meet the new financial and operational challenges with value for money being a key priority with regular Transformation update reports considered by the Strategic Governance Board chaired by the Commissioner.
- 1.8 The latest His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report was published on Wednesday 18 September and inspectors have graded the Service as "outstanding" at responding to major and multi-agency incidents, in addition six gradings were classified as "good" and four gradings as "adequate".
- 1.9 Pressure on funding continues into the medium term as uncertainty also remains around assumptions for pay, pensions and Home Office grants. Whilst the current economic environment has shown some recent stability with reduced levels of headline inflation the MTFS assumptions around pay and pensions remain under review and close scrutiny.
- 1.10 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) are currently requesting that the Home Office and Treasury consider a further flexibility regarding the referendum limit for the Fire and Rescue. The Commissioner will incorporate a number of Council Tax scenarios into the budget consultation process for 2025/26 giving the residents of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent the opportunity to have their say.
- 1.11 The Fire and Rescue Service is currently consulting on the updated Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) that will sit alongside the Commissioner's revised Fire and Rescue Plan.

2.0 The Budget Process

- 2.1 The budget process for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service for the fiscal year 2025/26 has now commenced. As in previous years, the budget will be developed using a zero-base approach, with comprehensive consultations involving budget holders.
- 2.2 All budget holders are required to attend a budget challenge session to review proposals for 2025/26 and identify efficiencies and mitigations for current year cost pressures. A Principal Officer, along with finance representatives, will attend all major budget challenge meetings to ensure consistent and appropriate scrutiny. Budget holders have also been asked to develop Financial Business Continuity Plans as part of this process. This approach has been successful in previous years and continues to enhance the financial acumen of all budget holders.
- 2.3 The headline timetable for the 2025/26 budget process is shown below:

<u>Budget Timetable</u>	<u>Task</u>
16 October 2024	Budget Preparation commenced
16 October for 6 weeks	Budget holder consultation
24 October and 27 November	Capital Review Group Meetings
30 November – 4 December 2024	Draft pay and non-pay budget ready for review process
20 December 2024 (tbc)	Draft Local Government Finance Settlement (date tbc)
December 2024 – January 2025	Budget Consultation and budget presentations to the Strategic Governance Board (22/01/25) and Service Management Board (13/01/25)
31 January 2025	ETAP (Finance Panel Meeting)
31 January 2025	Business Rates Budget Finalised (NNDR1 deadline for billing authorities)
10 February 2025	Police, Fire and Crime Panel- Precept setting and Budget 2025/26 / MTFS report / capital and treasury management strategy reports
14 February 2025	All precept notices issued following Commissioner approval

3.0 Background and updated Financial Position 2024/25

- 3.1 The total revenue budget was approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner for 2024/25 at **£50.065m**, following presentation to the Panel in February 2024.
- 3.2 Settlement Funding for the Authority comprises of three funding streams shown below. The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Business Rates top-up are shown below as per the Local Government Finance Settlement issued for 2024/25, with the 1% share of local business rates based upon the final NNDR1 submissions from the nine local billing authorities.
- 3.3 The Settlement Funding for 2024/25 was made up of three separate areas:

	2024/25 £m
1% share of Local Business Rates	3.935
Business Rates Top-up	6.494
RSG (Revenue Support Grant)	5.781
RSG (Pension Grant Consolidation)	1.707
Total Settlement Funding	17.917

- 3.4 The Total Settlement Funding for 2024/25 included the Firefighters' Pension Grant which has now been rolled into RSG from 2024/25. The Firefighters pension grant of £115m was introduced in 2019/20 with grants allocated to Fire and Rescue Authorities to cover 90% of the 12.6% increase in employer pension contributions. The grant allocated to the Staffordshire Commissioner was £1.707m as shown above.
- 3.5 In addition to the above Council Tax is collected by the nine billing authorities in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The current band D Council Tax is set at £86.77 (£1.67 per week) for the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority, resulting in collection of **£31.746m** for 2023/24 based upon a collection tax base of 365,868 properties and a collection surplus of **£0.401m**.

Financial Position – as at 30 September 2024 (See Appendix A)

- 3.6 Overall the financial position for the Authority is “on track” year to date and demonstrating good progress with a total revenue spend as at 30 September of £24.9m, in line with the phased budget.
- 3.7 As of 30 September 2024, total pay expenditure was £16.7 million, which included additional costs incurred within wholetime pay. These costs have been partially offset by savings in support staff. The majority of the additional wholetime costs attributable to the timing of the new recruits' course, originally budgeted for 2023/24. While crewing deficiency costs have decreased they remain above budget, now reduced to eight casual contracts in September to support wholetime crewing. On-call pay was elevated during this period due to increased turn-outs in August, as well as additional holiday and bank holiday pay.

- 3.8 Total non-pay and income have slightly exceeded the budget after six months. Interest receivable remains favourable, bolstered by the Firefighter Pension Top-up grant (budgeted) and the pension remedy grants (not budgeted due to late notification), both received in July. Consequently, the cash balance at the end of the month was £29.3 million, which is £8.2 million higher than the original budget set in February. The additional remedy grant funding covers the immediate costs for both the Sargeant/McCloud pension remedy and the Matthews second options exercise. Quarterly reporting to the Home Office will be required.
- 3.9 The first draft of the annual forecast has also been completed which includes any known material variances. The annual forecast before the use of reserves shows a small saving to budget of £0.1m. The annual forecast will be reviewed in detail and refined as part of the 2025/26 budget setting exercise which will include detailed consultation with all budget holders (see above).

4.0 MTFS Assumptions and Update

- 4.1 The Commissioner receives funding from a number of sources as outlined above with the majority of this being received through Settlement Funding and the Council Tax Precept. Funding and income assumptions are currently being reviewed as part of the MTFS process ahead of the Settlement Funding expected to be received on or before 20 December 2024.
- 4.2 The Commissioner and Staffordshire Fire are reviewing current planned revenue savings, pressures, proposed investment areas and capital spend. This work being undertaken as part of the budget setting process in preparation for the 2025/26 settlement and has identified a number of high-level revenue pressures and considers the potential opportunity arising should there be any council tax flexibility afforded as part of the settlement.
- 4.3 The overall position into the medium term shows a forecast gap in revenue funding of £0.8m for 2025/26 reducing to a £0.3m gap by 2028/29.
- 4.4 The current MTFS Assumptions have been updated as follows, with the impact upon the current MTFS shown within paragraph 4.5:

Category		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
		Budget	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan
Pay award	MTFS	5.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
	Revised	4.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Gas, Electric Fuel *average	MTFS	-23.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
	Revised *	-27.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
General non-pay inflation	MTFS	5.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
	Revised	4.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Unitary Charge for PFI	MTFS	9.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
	Revised	9.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%

- 4.5 The table below shows the estimated impact of major assumptions based upon the current reporting position and the updated MTFS assumptions:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan
	£m	£m	£m	£m
MTFS Reported Budget Position 24/25 (surplus / (deficit))	(0.4)	0.1	0.1	0.2
Pay Award and pressures	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Changes to Capital Financing	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Non Pay Cost review	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3
Pension Costs	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)
Income from Investments and S31 Grants	(0.1)	(0.2)	(0.3)	(0.3)
Investment into the Service	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.6)
Revised MTFS Position	(0.8)	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.2)

4.6 Pay Award and Pressures

Pay increases were budgeted at 5% for 2024/25 for all staff, reducing to 3% in 2025/26 and 2% thereafter as shown above (see 4.4).

The actual pay award for operational (Grey Book) staff was agreed at 4% for 2025/26, and recently the Local Government Pay Award was settled for Fire staff (Green Book) at £1,290 per pay band or 2.5% Back dated to 1 April 2024. The assumption for 2025/26 at 3% for all staff is considered to be a reasonable estimate following the reduction in headline inflation and CPI reported at 1.7% in September 2024.

The increase in the employer national insurance contributions and change to the NI free threshold will add c.£0.45m to the Authority's costs. On the basis that the Government has stated that it will fund this cost increase for public sector bodies, this has been assumed net nil. Given that the detail around exact funding is awaited, there remains a risk that the funding will be insufficient depending on how the additional funding is calculated and distributed.

The panel should note that the pay negotiations for a majority of staff employed by the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority are carried out nationally, unless local agreements are in place.

4.7 Changes to Capital Financing

The improvements to capital financing costs have arisen following a reduced Minimum Revenue Provision (MPR) liability resulting from the actual year end position and additional revenue financing of capital expenditure.

4.8 Non-Pay Costs Review

The current year trends for electricity and gas costs are being closely monitored during the year and after six months of the year are showing a slightly favorable position. This position of course does not reflect the impact of the coming winter period but a small savings has been assumed for 2024/25 and into the medium term

4.9 Pension Costs

The Home Office secured a further £85.3m of Firefighters' Pensions Grant in 2024/25, and £6m towards the admin costs, to compensate for the increase in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme employer contribution rate from 1 April 2024. This is following 2020 valuation of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes which resulted in employer pension contributions into the 2015 scheme increasing to 37.6% from 1 April 2024.

The actual grant received by the Authority was less than the budgeted amount, and this has been corrected within the updated MTFS.

4.10 Income from Investments and S31 Grants

The favourable cash balance position has resulted in additional interest receivable in year and reflected into the MTFS (see paragraph 7.8).

The final factor for the distribution of S31 Grants announced by the Home Office was lower than the 124/499 factor estimated as part of the budget. This has now been corrected as part of the MTFS update.

The MTFS update assumed that the 4% Funding Guarantee introduced as part of the 2024/25 Settlement will remain in place for 2025/26 and beyond. This Funding Guarantee amounted to £268m across the public sector and £0.828m for this Authority. There is therefore a significant risk into the medium term, should this grant not be maintained as part of the 2025/26 Settlement.

4.11 Investments into the Service

The Commissioner has supported investment into the Service during 2024/25 this includes investment into the ICT department and the introduction of a new Project and Portfolio Manager post in addition to investment into the On-call establishment.

The business case for the replacement of the existing Command and Control System is being developed by West Midlands and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services. Whilst the exact cost of the new system will be subject to the commercial process and the contribution required by Staffordshire has not been determined an early estimate has now been incorporated into this MTFS update. Additional information will be available to allow a more robust cost to be included during the budget setting process.

5.0 Sensitivity Analysis

- 5.1 The MTFS refresh is being undertaken in a continuing uncertain environment and this should be noted by the Panel. It has been announced that 2025/26 will also be a single year settlement which does not support planning into the medium term.
- 5.2 Funding assumptions both in relation to local and national funding are likely to cause material changes late on in the planning process, something that cannot be avoided but needs to be recognised.
- 5.3 The following sensitivity analysis is based upon the approved MTFS paper from February 2024:

Cost / Income Area	Change	£000s
Pay Costs	+/- 1%	317
Premises Costs (incl utilities)	+/- 1%	29
Vehicles	+/- 1%	10
Supplies and Services	+/- 1%	94
Employer Pension Contributions	+/- 1%	233
Business Rates	+/- 1%	22
Revenue Support Grant	+/- 1%	58
Precept	+/- 1%	321
Council Tax Base	+/- 1%	317

- 5.4 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Home Office are in discussion with Ministers and HM Treasury with regard to the referendum limit that will be included within the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26. The NFCC have requested that Ministers consider allowing some additional flexibility for Authorities when setting Council Tax increases. A £5 increase in Council Tax for this Authority would raise an additional £0.9m per annum compared to the current assumption of 2.99%.

6.0 Service Transformation

- 6.1 The requirement for Service Transformation is to ensure that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service “is able to provide a modern, efficient and sustainable level of service to the public which does not compromise the safety of our staff or our communities.”
- 6.2 The first phase of the transformation work has been logged and monitored by the Service on an electronic live tracker utilising a programme called SharePoint. The tracker has been scrutinised by the Service’s Management Board and the Commissioner’s Strategic Governance Board with 16 out of the 19 themes completed to date
- 6.3 Savings options in excess of £1.3m were included within the approved MTFS of which

£1.1m has been fully implemented. Three remaining workstreams are nearing completion: the mobilising of three-person crew of On-call Staff, the Prevention, Protection and Partnerships review and finally Shared Estates.

- 6.5 The next stages of transformation are very much focussed on efficiency and productivity driving improvements for the public and the workforce. The Transformation Board is meeting on a quarterly basis but can adjust its work to suit the demand and progress of each topic. Whilst some work remains on the original transformation themes captured in the service' online tracker. There are some new topics which are about to be brought into this sphere of work.
- 6.6 The Service will continue to develop its transformation options as this pro-active approach has led to the positive feedback following the recent HMICFRS inspection. As part of the recent inspection report by HMICFRS the Service receive a grading of "good" as making the Service affordable now and in the future.

7.0 Capital (See appendix B)

- 7.1 As part of the current MTFS refresh and budget build for 2025/26 capital plans across Staffordshire Fire are being refreshed. This work is undertaken through the Capital Review Group that is chaired by the Director of Finance.
- 7.2 The capital programme for 2024/25 (see Appendix B) was approved at £5.7m plus £1.0m of carry-over from 2023/24. The capital commitment as at 30 September was £2.6m which is 54% of the latest programme forecast which is just over £4.8m.
- 7.3 The planned work for Brewood Fire Station, originally set to begin in 2024, has been postponed due to significant cost increases. This project is now rescheduled for 2025/26 and will be managed by the Estates Team. A review of the capital programme, conducted with all capital budget managers, has identified a deliverable schedule. As a consequence, £1.6 million of capital projects have been reprogrammed to 2025/26.
- 7.4 The two new Appliances (ERP's) have now been delivered into the Service and will be operation during quarter 3.
- 7.5 A full capital programme update and Capital Strategy will be presented to the Panel in February 2025 as part of the budget and MTFS papers.

8.0 Reserves and Balances

- 8.1 The Authority holds two reserves, an Earmarked Reserve which is build up through any surplus within the Income and Expenditure account. The utilisation of this fund has been established with the approved Reserves Strategy; and a General Reserve which is held to protect against any emergency conditions that may arise.
- 8.2 The Commissioner currently holds £1.9m in General Reserves and a risk assessment for this reserve was undertaken as part of the budget setting process for 2024/25 and the

overall provision of £1.9m has remained unchanged for a number of years and represents 3.8% of the revenue budget for the year.

- 8.3 At 1 April 2024 the Authority held £7m in Specific/Earmarked Reserves. This reserve is supported by the approved Reserves Strategy which will be updated for the new budget year. This reserve has continued to reduce following earmarked contribution to capital spend, reducing long term debt, in line with the approved strategy.
- 8.4 The amount of earmarked reserves required to support the budget setting process for 2025/26 and the consideration for future transformation requirements will be reviewed as part of the updated reserves strategy report and MTFS update. The utilisation of additional levels of earmarked reserves will be required to support the budget for 2025/26 based upon the upward pressures identified within this report.
- 8.5 Reserves, whilst set aside for a particular purpose, currently are utilised in cash terms to support capital spend in lieu of taking additional external borrowing at this time.

Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Appendix A

Financial Position as at 30th September 2024

	Revenue Summary - September 2024								
	Current Month			Year to Date			Year End 2024/25		
	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Variance £'000
Pay									
Wholetime	1,678	1,675	3	9,780	10,041	(261)	20,050	20,242	(192)
On-Call	496	581	(84)	3,131	3,143	(12)	6,262	6,286	(24)
Support	501	502	(1)	3,005	2,909	95	6,015	5,880	135
FF Pension Grant	(116)	(104)	(12)	(695)	(622)	(73)	(1,390)	(1,244)	(146)
Total Pay Costs	2,559	2,654	(95)	15,221	15,471	(250)	30,937	31,164	(227)
Other Employee Costs	205	230	(25)	1,234	1,265	(31)	2,600	2,611	(11)
Efficiency Savings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2,764	2,884	(120)	16,455	16,736	(281)	33,537	33,775	(238)
Non Pay									
Premises Costs	214	164	50	3,476	3,303	173	5,092	4,992	100
Transport Costs	74	75	(1)	553	590	(37)	1,044	1,044	0
Supplies & Services Costs:									
- Equipment, Furniture & Materials	48	62	(15)	302	331	(29)	612	612	0
- Catering Costs	2	3	(1)	14	16	(2)	29	29	0
- Clothes & Uniforms	30	28	2	179	171	8	357	357	0
- Printing, Stationery & General	9	11	(1)	156	178	(22)	256	256	0
- Contracted Services	170	159	11	919	892	27	1,883	1,883	0
- Communication & Computing	146	151	(5)	1,675	1,708	(32)	2,507	2,507	0
- Expenses	4	1	4	27	23	4	54	54	0
CFS Initiatives	26	26	(0)	143	106	36	340	340	0
Other Support Services	272	272	(0)	1,621	1,546	75	3,352	3,352	0
Unitary Charge	343	343	0	2,057	2,057	0	4,114	4,114	0
Efficiency Savings - Non Pay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1,339	1,295	44	11,122	10,920	202	19,639	19,539	100
Income									
Income - General	(616)	(563)	(53)	(2,753)	(2,611)	(142)	(5,510)	(5,210)	(300)
Grants Released	0	(7)	7	0	6	(6)	0	0	0
Interest Receivable	(45)	(144)	99	(271)	(451)	180	(541)	(868)	327
	(661)	(713)	53	(3,023)	(3,056)	32	(6,051)	(6,078)	27
Capital Charges	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,560	1,360	200
Interest Payable	20	20	(0)	363	370	(8)	720	720	0
Revenue Financing of Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	783	783	0
Total before use of reserves	3,462	3,485	(23)	24,916	24,970	(55)	50,187	50,098	89
Use of Reserves	(10)	(13)	3	(61)	(113)	52	(123)	(34)	(89)
Total Revenue Budget	3,452	3,472	(20)	24,854	24,857	(3)	50,065	50,065	0

Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Appendix B

Capital Programme Position as at 30th September 2024

	Capital Programme Budget 2024/25			Capital Programme Forecast 2024/25			Actual to Date 2024/25		
	Approved Budget 2024/25 £	Reprofiling of Budget from 2023/24 £	Restated Capital Programme £	Savings Identified £	Spend Reprofiling to 2025/26 £	Latest Forecast Programme £	Actual £	Commitments £	Total £
Building Enhancements	1,779,000	435,000	2,214,000	(29,967)	(1,166,677)	1,017,356	319,478	64,983	384,461
Operational Equipment	854,696	405,000	1,259,696	(3,282)	(210,000)	1,046,414	380,539	10,097	390,637
Vehicles									
Heavy Fleet	1,530,904	0	1,530,904	(70,000)	(50,000)	1,410,904	503,976	487,868	991,844
Light Fleet	570,000	56,000	626,000	(30,000)	0	596,000	165,495	360,092	525,587
	2,100,904	56,000	2,156,904	(100,000)	(50,000)	2,006,904	669,470	847,960	1,517,431
Information Technology	970,000	62,000	1,032,000	0	(265,000)	767,000	224,831	59,513	284,344
Total Capital Programme	5,704,600	958,000	6,662,600	(133,249)	(1,691,677)	4,837,674	1,594,318	982,554	2,576,872



Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel – 18 November 2024

Police & Crime Plan and Fire & Rescue Plan 2024-2028 – Consultation outcomes

Purpose of Report

This report is a summary of the results obtained from the analysis of the public and stakeholder consultation undertaken to seek the views on the Commissioner's four-year draft Police & Crime, and Fire & Rescue plans.

Recommendation

A full consultation took place for both the Police & Crime plan and the Fire & Rescue plan. Emerging themes have been detailed in this document. These themes are now being taken forward and will be reflected in the final plans which will be launched shortly.

Background

A programme of public and stakeholder consultation took place between 16 September and 21 October, seeking views on the Staffordshire Commissioner's proposed Police & Crime Plan and Fire & Rescue Plan 2024-2028. A range of methods were used to encourage participation, resulting in responses from 1,615 people from Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Conclusions

A detailed breakdown of the results is included in this report. The report also details how the feedback will be incorporated into the final draft.

Introduction

Both the Police & Crime Plan and the Fire & Rescue Plan are high-level plans which sit as an overarching strategy to set out the vision for community safety in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent over the next three years.

A suite of more detailed co-ordinated delivery plans will sit under these plans. These include but are not limited to operational delivery plans from Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue, locality plans from local councils and a commissioning strategy. These will be responsive to the Police & Crime and Fire & Rescue plans and will be developed following the consultation process and finalisation of the plans.



How we did it

We used a range of methods to promote both consultations including:

- **Social media** – Multiple social media posts were issued from the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office (SCO), Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue and partners
- **Media** – Press releases to inform local media of the importance of the consultations
- **Stakeholders** – Emails from the Commissioner requesting key partners', including MPs, Councillors and Chief Executives of Local Councils, involvement
- **Volunteers** - Emails from the Commissioner requesting SCO, Police and Fire volunteer's involvement
- **Smart Alert**- Multiple messages issued to 107,161 people via Staffordshire Smart Alert (resulting in 1,820 clicks through to the consultation page on our website)
- **Internal** – Multiple internal messages sent to SCO, Police and Fire staff to encourage participation
- **Community Safety Partnerships** - Emails from the Commissioner requesting all local Community Safety Partnerships take part and share the consultation
- **Local Businesses** – Utilised connections with organisations who are in frequent with local businesses to request their feedback
- **Commissioned services** – Shared the consultation with all services commissioned by the SCO to encourage participation
- **Facebook community groups** – Direct engagement with local communities via relevant local Facebook groups. As the SCO business page, we joined multiple local community groups to encourage participation in the consultations. These groups had a combined total of 463,288 people (36 groups).
- **Social media adverts** – Adverts on Facebook and Instagram to target both those living in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and more specifically, those who have an interest in topics related to policing and fire & rescue. These adverts resulted in 383 link clicks and was displayed on 114,214 timelines.
- **Nextdoor app** – The Nextdoor app is a hyperlocal social networking service for neighbourhoods. Unlike other social media platforms, when joining the site, you are automatically connected to your entire network. The Staffordshire network currently has over 176,000 people registered. We utilised this platform to share messages promoting the consultations to everyone in the Staffordshire network.



Who we targeted

Consulted with:



Consultation invites were adapted for different groups focusing on principles, priorities and/or selected commitments within the draft plans. Both multiple choice and free text questions were used to help quantify and explain opinion.

The above methods were used to contact community groups and stakeholders including:

- Officers and staff within Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue
- The Police, Fire and Crime Panel
- Partner agencies such as NHS, Ministry of Defence, Environment Agency, community safety partnerships and the voluntary sector
- Young people, universities, the Staffordshire Space programme and Prince's Trust
- MPs, District and Borough Councillors, Parish Councillors, Council Leaders and Chief Executives
- Business networks including Chambers of Commerce, the Staffordshire LEP, PABCIS and direct communication with local businesses
- Volunteers from the SCO including the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel, Force and Fire volunteers, Community Speed Watch, Support Staffordshire and SCVYS
- Those commissioned by the SCO
- Local community groups including the Women's Institute, Staffordshire Young Farmers, local scout and girl guiding groups and Soroptimists



- Faith and ethnic minority community groups including the Burton Caribbean Association, Stafford Muslim Centre and the Staffordshire Police Equality and Diversity unit
- Staff Associations / Trade Unions
- Local media

The results





Detailed themes from the Police & Crime Plan consultation

Responses to consultations cannot be combined to give a single representative sample of opinion. However, consistent responses provide a strong indication of likely opinion and can usefully inform development of the plans.

This should be seen as a first step in public consultation and engagement throughout the lifetime of the plans to ensure they continue to genuinely represent the needs and expectations of the communities they are designed to serve.

Police & Crime - Priority 1 – An outstanding local Police service

	VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Improve non-emergency contact service such as 101 so people receive a high-quality, timely response	73.87% 868	24.34% 286	1.62% 19	0.17% 2	1,175
Respond quickly and effectively to incidents and thoroughly investigate crime and ASB	93.45% 1,098	6.30% 74	0.26% 3	0.00% 0	1,175
Work effectively with partners to tackle burglary, robbery, vehicle, business, retail and rural crime	78.88% 926	19.59% 230	1.36% 16	0.17% 2	1,174
Ensure that police and partners are equipped to tackle organised criminals and reduce violence and harm	87.21% 1,023	12.28% 144	0.43% 5	0.09% 1	1,173
Help the police to improve their service by learning from complainants and victims	68.94% 808	26.96% 316	3.75% 44	0.34% 4	1,172
Build strong relationships with communities through crime prevention and early intervention	70.00% 819	26.58% 311	2.99% 35	0.43% 5	1,170
Improve road safety by tackling criminality, excessive speed, drug or drink driving, unsafe and uninsured vehicles	75.40% 886	21.87% 257	2.30% 27	0.43% 5	1,175
Robustly tackle unacceptable behaviour by officers and staff	74.55% 876	21.62% 254	3.06% 36	0.77% 9	1,175

Police & Crime - Priority 2 – Supporting victims

	VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Work with partners to reduce repeat victimisation	67.29% 786	29.88% 349	2.57% 30	0.26% 3	1,168
Work with the NHS and others to ensure victims can access related services eg mental health support	62.48% 731	32.31% 378	4.53% 53	0.68% 8	1,170
Ensure free specialist support services are in place for victims and witnesses	61.99% 724	33.82% 395	3.42% 40	0.77% 9	1,168
Ensure support services are accessible to all communities	61.34% 714	33.33% 388	4.21% 49	1.12% 13	1,164
Ensure victims are kept informed about support available to them and how their case is progressing	72.28% 845	25.06% 293	2.22% 26	0.43% 5	1,169



Police & Crime - Priority 3 – Preventing and protecting

	VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Ensure prevention and early intervention programmes are in place to stop the onset of offending behaviour	74.49% 873	22.27% 261	3.07% 36	0.17% 2	1,172
Ensure services are in place to divert vulnerable people away from crime and ASB	68.40% 801	27.16% 318	3.76% 44	0.68% 8	1,171
Work with partners to help those leaving prison reintegrate into the community and achieve stable lifestyles	53.08% 621	35.98% 421	8.38% 98	2.56% 30	1,170
Ensure offenders are held accountable for their actions	92.14% 1,078	7.18% 84	0.60% 7	0.09% 1	1,170
Ensure programmes are in place to address specific offences e.g. domestic abuse	72.18% 846	25.09% 294	2.30% 27	0.43% 5	1,172
Work with partners to prevent people being drawn into terrorism	72.99% 854	21.97% 257	4.44% 52	0.60% 7	1,170

Police & Crime - Priority 4 – Impactful partnerships

	VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Support Local Community Safety Partnerships to develop strategies to prevent and tackle crime and ASB in their area	63.71% 746	31.68% 371	3.84% 45	0.77% 9	1,171
Encourage more people to take part in volunteering, community representation and scrutiny	34.44% 403	46.92% 549	15.64% 183	2.99% 35	1,170
Work with regional partners to dismantle serious organised crime gangs and prevent potential terrorist activity	83.69% 980	14.35% 168	1.79% 21	0.17% 2	1,171
Work with partners in the Criminal Justice System to deliver more rapid justice	81.25% 949	17.12% 200	1.28% 15	0.34% 4	1,168
Work with partners in the Criminal Justice System to deliver quality services to victims and witnesses	72.58% 847	24.25% 283	2.74% 32	0.43% 5	1,167
Work jointly towards reducing road casualties that have devastating consequences for families	72.99% 854	23.93% 280	2.31% 27	0.77% 9	1,170

The following is a summary of results obtained from the free text question which asked for any further comments.

718 respondents provided comments in the free text box which asked “is there anything else you would like to see included in the Police and Crime Plan?”.

Priority 1: An outstanding local Police service

- More visible policing
- Cut 101 waiting times, enable direct contact with local police teams
- Increase number of officers
- More presence in local communities, consistent officers, local knowledge, proactive and reactive



- Deny criminals in Staffordshire use of the road, increase road safety and make car thefts a priority
- Accessible stations people can visit, police posts in villages
- Improve response times
- Reduce paper work by making systems and processes more efficient and less time consuming
- More focus needed to address rural crime
- Take action on ASB and low-level crime

Priority 2: Supporting victims

- Vulnerable people need to feel safe when out in the community
- More support for people accused of crimes who may be innocent
- More needs to be done regarding violence against women and girls, and specifically mapping / predicting types of crimes
- Better systems needed to keep victims informed
- Protect the victim and not the offender
- More focus needed to protect children from exploitation
- Better communication with victims is needed
- More support for domestic abuse and sexual abuse victims

Priority 3: Preventing and protecting

- More proactive policing eg: stop checks, stop search and overnight patrol
- More police cars on roads where there are no cameras or traffic calming methods
- The importance of providing a safe place for young people to 'hang out' to prevent them from being drawn in to crime
- Increase community events and more involvement with schools to bridge the trust gap between young people and the Police
- Encourage young officers to be involved in a diverse range of policing so they are better equipped to deal effectively with the complexities of life
- More emphasis on people taking personal responsibility for their actions in order to prevent crime
- Not making 'petty' crime a priority will only lead to greater crime
- Intervention with early ASB offenders is essential

Priority 4: Impactful partnerships

- More joint commissioning of services to avoid duplication
- A clearer definition of areas of responsibility between Police and Social Care is needed to avoid Officers taking on a social worker role
- Allow Police Officers to focus on policing and signpost people to non-Police matters
- Closer working with schools to address behaviour early on
- Closer working with local parish councils



- Working closer with partners is essential
- Particular focus should be given to the other organisations within the CJS, such as CPS and Courts

Additional feedback

- Police should tackle 'real crime' not 'woke' policing
- All priorities are 'very important' but Policing is under funded
- More information given to public about what police are doing and their successes
- Not everything the Police do is their responsibility but other partners
- Ensure officers know they are appreciated by the vast majority of the population
- More investment needed into digital policing
- Police do an excellent job but the wider criminal justice system lets them down when it comes to sentencing
- More localised Police Posts instead of centralised hubs
- Thank you for our dedication to keeping Staffordshire safe
- Many respondents felt that the questionnaire led them to agree with everything and not prioritise
- Cost of the Commissioner and his office is not value for money
- Stop two-tier policing
- Less paper work for Police Officers

Detailed themes from the Fire & Rescue Plan consultation

Fire & Rescue - Priority 1 – An outstanding Fire & Rescue service

	VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Ensure the right resources are in the right place at the right time to respond to fires and other emergencies	97.67% 420	1.86% 8	0.23% 1	0.23% 1	430
Work with other areas to ensure a joint response to incidents regionally and nationally	70.07% 302	27.84% 120	1.62% 7	0.46% 2	431
Understand and respond to the concerns of rural communities	69.84% 301	27.84% 120	1.62% 7	0.70% 3	431
Drive further collaboration with Police to deliver effective services that provide value for money	56.88% 244	31.24% 134	8.86% 38	3.03% 13	429
Robustly tackle unacceptable behaviour by firefighters and staff	71.23% 307	24.13% 104	3.94% 17	0.70% 3	431
Increase the diversity of the workforce to better reflect our communities	31.93% 137	36.60% 157	20.75% 89	10.72% 46	429



Fire & Rescue - Priority 2 – Preventing

	VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Target Safe & Well checks at those most at risk of fire in the home	70.79% 303	26.40% 113	2.10% 9	0.70% 3	428
Ensure services are targeted towards people and places most at risk	70.63% 303	27.51% 118	0.93% 4	0.93% 4	429
Divert children away from harm and help them make informed, safe choices	72.43% 310	23.36% 100	3.50% 15	0.70% 3	428
Work with health so people get support to reduce the risk of fire in the home, eg mental health, drug and alcohol support	53.72% 231	38.14% 164	6.51% 28	1.63% 7	430

Fire & Rescue - Priority 3 – Protecting

	VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Recruit and retain specialist staff to assess high-risk premises	69.30% 298	27.44% 118	1.86% 8	1.40% 6	430
Work with other emergency services to develop their approach to managing incidents where multiple services attend	75.12% 323	23.72% 102	0.93% 4	0.23% 1	430
Work jointly towards reducing road casualties that have devastating consequences for families	72.43% 310	24.30% 104	3.04% 13	0.23% 1	428
Prepare for disruption including adverse weather, public health crises, transport incidents and terrorist attacks	74.13% 318	23.31% 100	1.86% 8	0.70% 3	429
Engage with partners, planners and developers to deliver high fire safety standards in new buildings	73.49% 316	23.02% 99	2.56% 11	0.93% 4	430
Encourage volunteers and community engagement e.g. Community Speed Watch and Safe+Sound education programme	37.30% 160	46.85% 201	9.79% 42	6.06% 26	429
Ensure premises and events prepare for and are protected from terrorist attack	61.77% 265	29.37% 126	7.69% 33	1.17% 5	429

The following is a summary of results obtained from the free text question which asked for any further comments.

185 respondents provided comments in the free text box which asked “is there anything else you would like to see included in the Fire & Rescue Plan?”.

Priority 1: An outstanding Fire & Rescue service

- Increased numbers of appliances and staff
- The importance of keeping fire stations in rural areas
- Less paperwork for Firefighters
- More collaborative work with the NHS
- Ensure excellent on-going training, job satisfaction levels and pay for firefighters to encourage retention and recruitment



- Greater emphasis on response and intervention
- Improve response times
- Crewing of 3s is dangerous

Priority 2: Preventing

- More recycling assistance offered to the vulnerable to reduce the risk of fire
- More work with schools
- Community engagement is very important. Prevention is better than cure. Awareness campaigns are very important
- Interact more with communities to improve confidence levels in the service
- Installation of free fire alarms and advice to householders on staying safe is an excellent way of preventing incidents

Priority 3: Protecting

- All emergency, health and support services should be joined up to help protect the vulnerable
- Maintain community links and increase fire safety awareness across all sections of the community, particularly the vulnerable
- More engagement with the community to teach how they can protect themselves

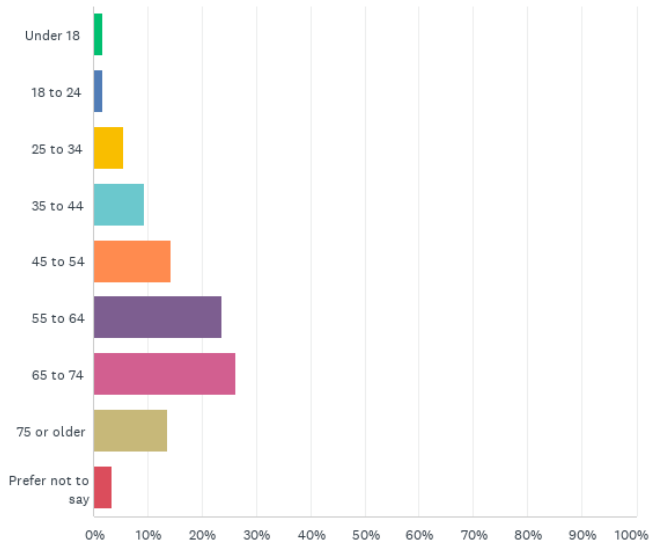
Additional feedback

- Some respondents felt that the questionnaire led them to agree with everything and not prioritise
- The Fire Service do a fantastic job
- Better support for the mental wellbeing of Firefighters and an awareness of the dangers of PTSD
- Fire services should only concentrate on their core service of fire and rescue
- Concentrating on the skills needed is more important than diversity to ensure the community has the most effective personnel to deliver what is needed
- Improve communication between partners and increase joint work
- Better pay and benefits for Firefighters

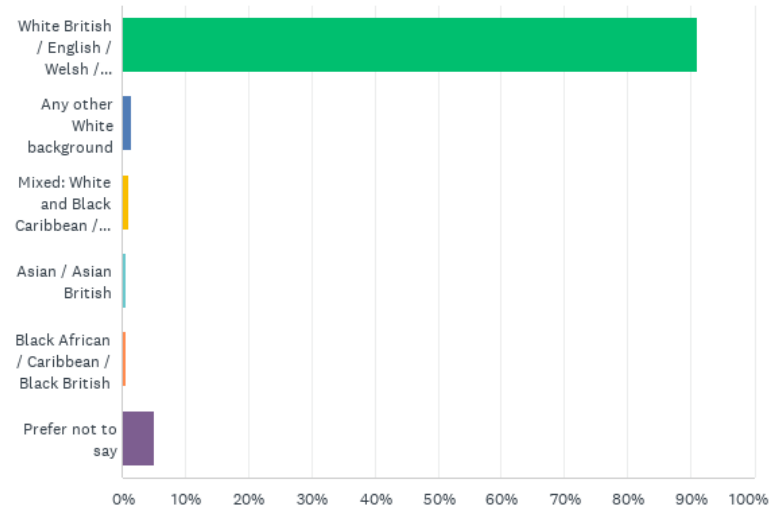


Demographic – Police & Crime Plan responses

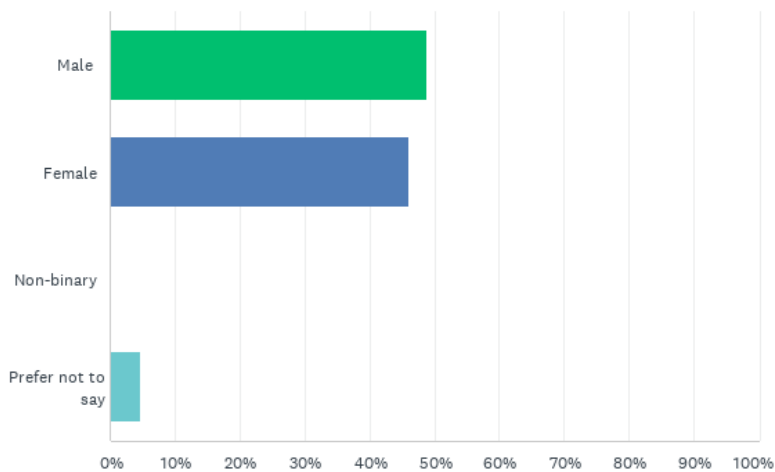
Q7 What is your age?



Q8 What is your ethnic origin?

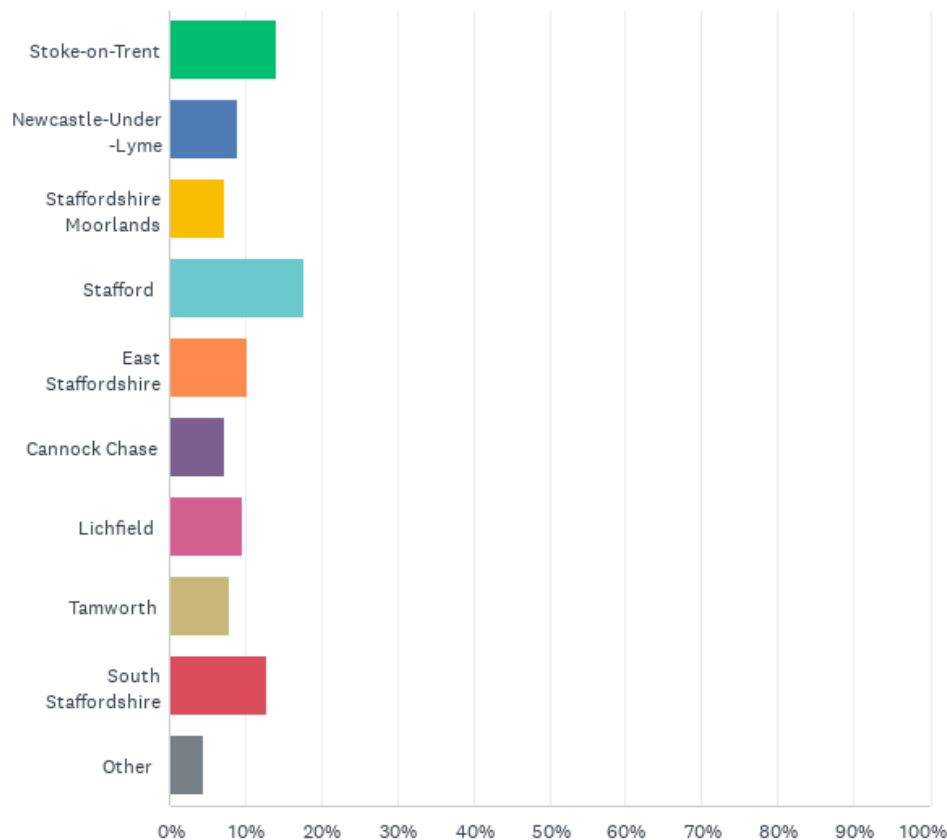


Q9 I am...

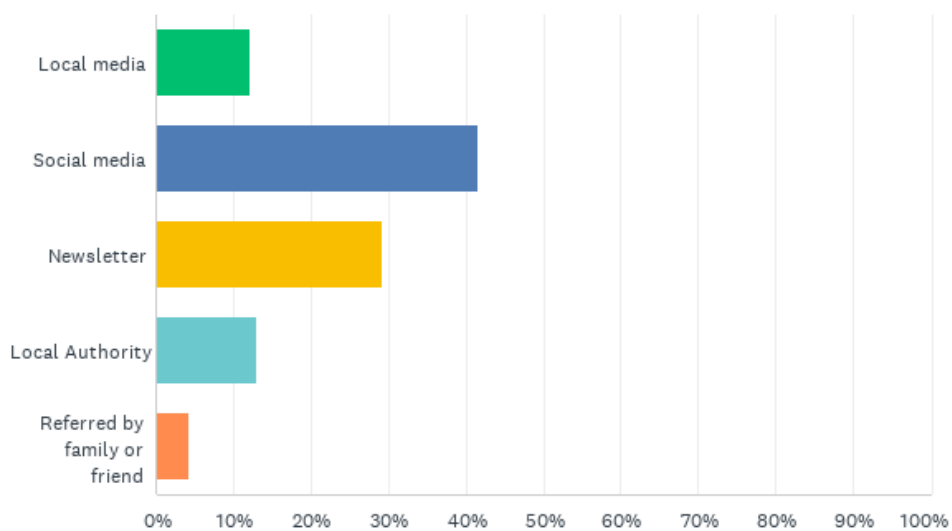




Q10 Which area of Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent do you live in?



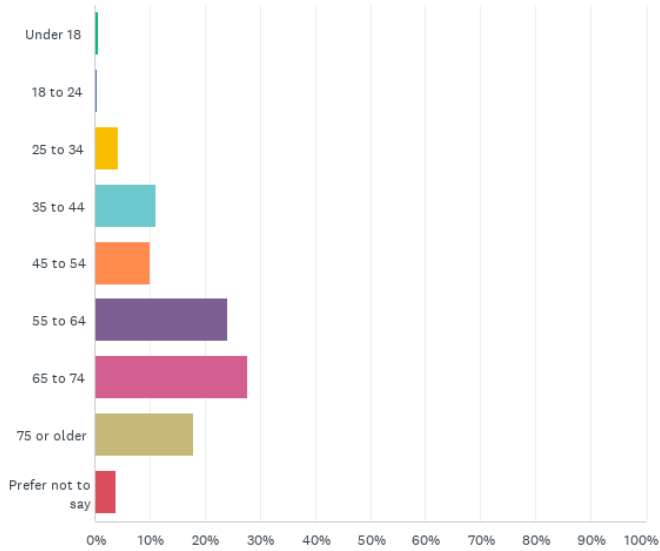
Q11 Where did you hear about this consultation?



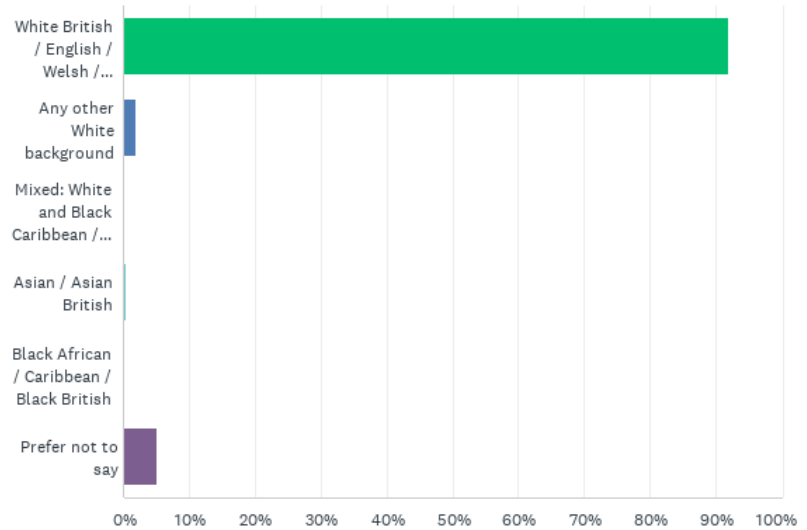


Demographic – Fire & Rescue Plan responses

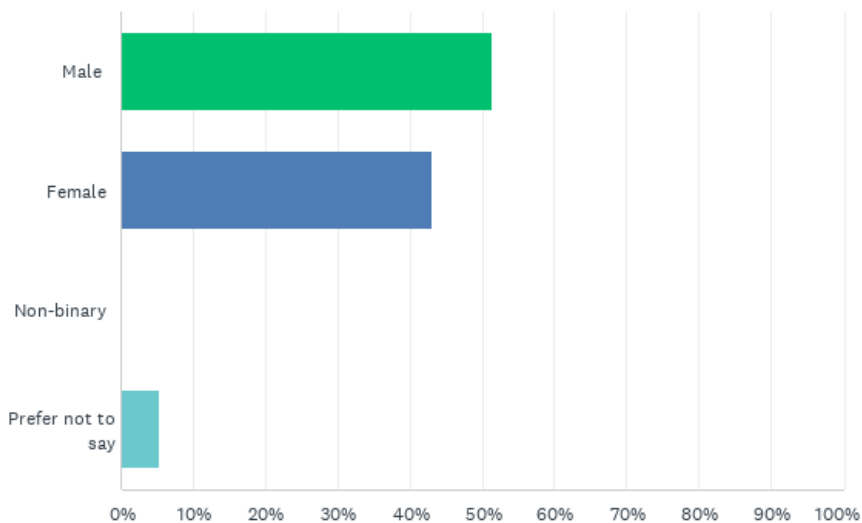
Q6 What is your age?



Q7 What is your ethnic origin?

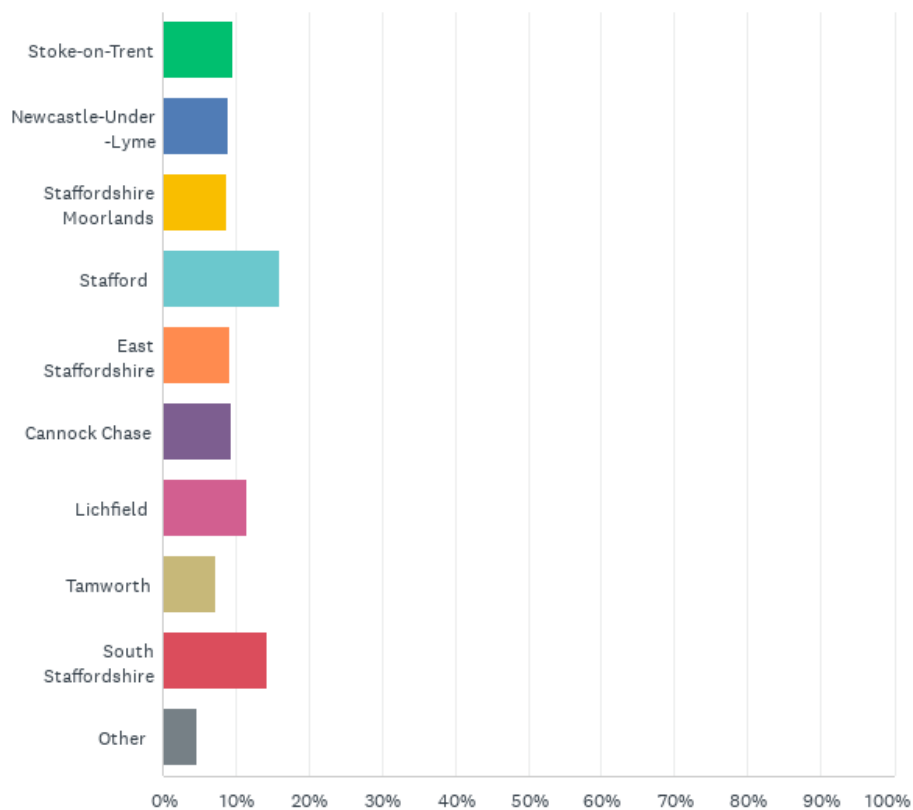


Q8 I am...

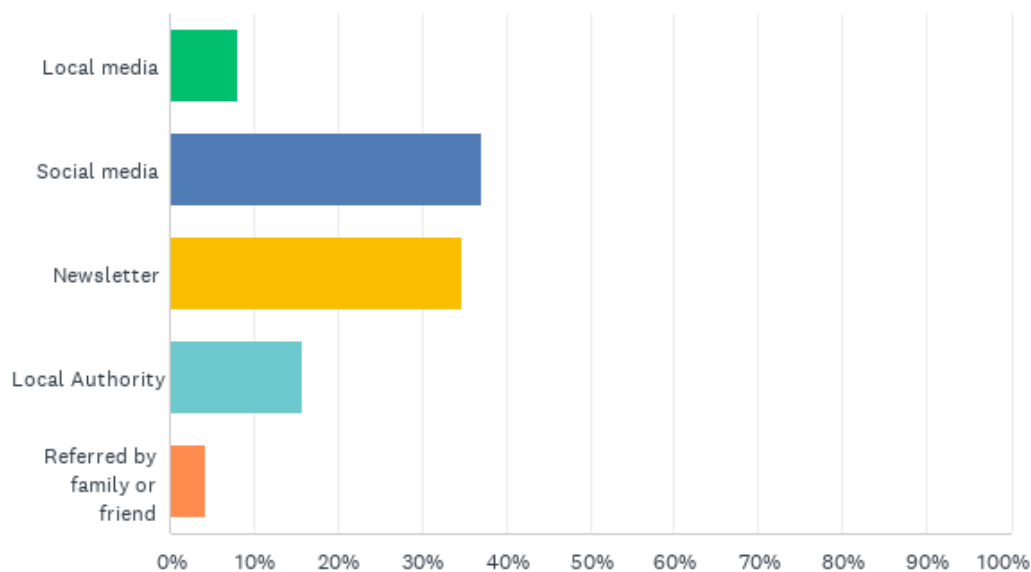




Q9 Which area of Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent do you live in?



Q10 Where did you hear about this consultation?



STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

18 November 2024

WORK PROGRAMME PLANNING 2024/25

Report of the Secretary

Recommendation

That the Panel note the dates of future meetings and considers the contents of its future Work Programme.

Background

By Regulation this Panel is required to meet on a *minimum* of 4 occasions each year with the facility to convene additional meetings as and when required.

There are a number of reports/matters which the Panel is required to consider:

Police and Crime Matters: the proposed Policing and Crime Precept each year, the Police and Crime Plan, The Commissioners Annual Report on the delivery of the Plan, Confirmation Hearings for a number of key posts and Reports on the Handling of Complaints.

Fire and Rescue Service Matters: The proposed Fire and Rescue Service Precept each year, the draft Fire and Rescue Plan/Corporate Safety Plan (incorporating the Integrated Risk Management Plan), the Annual Statement of Assurance and Confirmation Hearings for key posts in the Service.

Panel Meeting date	Agenda Items
11 June 2024	Panel training
24 June 2024 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Chairman • Appointment of Vice-Chairman • Annual Report on the Management of Complaints and Conduct Matters against the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner • Home Officer Grant 2023/24 • Consideration of the Commissioners Annual Report 2023/24 moved to sept. 2024 • Public question • Decisions made by the Commissioner. • Fire Misconduct and Complaints – annual report • HMICFRS inspections of Police Force and Fire
24 June 2024 12noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation hearing – Deputy Commissioner

30 September 2024 10am (was 23 rd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and Crime Plan / Fire and Rescue Plan Update • Consideration of the Commissioners Annual Report • Fire Safety Plan update • Public question
18 November 2024 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTFS/Budget Update – Policing Service • MTFS/Budget Update - Fire and Rescue Service • Fire and Rescue Annual Assurance Statement moved to February 2025
18 November 2024 12 noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation Hearing – Section 151 Officer
3 February 2025 10am (was 10th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFCC's proposed Police Budget and Precept 2025/26 • Police Misconduct and Complaint Regulations 2020 – annual report • Annual Conference for PFCP's - report
10 February 2025 10am (was 17th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of the PFCCs proposed Fire and Rescue Budget and Precept 2025/26 • Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan - Update Report • Fire and Rescue Annual Assurance Statement
17 February 2025 2pm (was 25th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If required, further consideration of proposed Police and/or Fire and Rescue Budget and Precept 2025/26
14 April 2025 10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business TBC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Items to be scheduled if/when appropriate.	Items to be scheduled if/when appropriate.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

J Tradewell (Secretary to the Panel)
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