

**For: Council**

**Date: 14th July 2015**

**Agenda Item 15**

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## **NOMINATION TO THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL FOR LICHFIELD DISTRICT**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To inform Members about the establishment of a Safer Neighbourhood Panel for Lichfield District and confirm representation from Lichfield District Council.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Council notes the Police and Crime Commissioner's intention to introduce a Safer Neighbourhood Panel for Lichfield District
- 2.2 That Councillors O'Hagan and Mrs Evans be appointed to serve on the Panel for a period of one year.

### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner is planning to introduce Safer Neighbourhood Panels in every local policing area across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent before the end of the year. Lichfield, Stafford and Newcastle have been chosen to be included in the second phase; Panels are already up and running in Cannock, South Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands.
- 3.2 The role of the Panel is to ensure policing in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is open and transparent and give local people the opportunity to influence how their area is policed including to:-
- Ensure residents are better informed and involved.
  - Scrutinise all elements of local policing to ensure both the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) and Police priorities are delivered.
  - Provide regular feedback to local policing teams and other community safety forums.
  - Collaborate with other functions to ensure that engagement and scrutiny work with Staffordshire Police is joined up.
  - Utilise and provide information that will aid greater transparency and openness.
  - Assist in the building of further community engagement opportunities.
  - Contribute to the wellbeing of the local area.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 The Panels will build on the work of the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel, whose role is to scrutinise elements of what Staffordshire Police does and help them to resolve issues and move forward in a positive way. The PCC has recognised the value of this work and so would like to see engagement and involvement at a more local level giving further scrutiny, openness and transparency in policing. The eleven Panels (eight in the county and three within Stoke) will enable people to influence and improve the way their local area is policed. The Panels are based on local policing boundaries, which are coterminous with local authority areas

## **5. Safer Neighbourhood Panels**

- 5.1 The overarching aim of the Panel is to hold the local policing commander to account to ensure that local policing is being delivered effectively. The Panel will also seek to identify improvement opportunities or areas of challenge that may require research. Task and finish groups may be established to do this. This will be achieved by providing local scrutiny of issues considered by the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel and also examination of crime figures, use of restorative justice and complaint resolution. The Panel will not discuss specific incidents and/or crimes (although specific ones may be selected as part of the scrutiny process). They will continue to be dealt with through the proper channels e.g. 101, 999 etc.
- 5.2 The Panel will be made up of between 12 and 15 members from a mix of backgrounds. Membership will be reviewed annually. This should comprise of:
- Ideally one county and one district Councillor (no more than a third of Panel members to be Councillors)
  - One representative of Neighbourhood Watch
  - One Magistrate
  - Local residents (ideally, around two thirds of the membership)
  - Business community representatives
- 5.3 Although the Panel does not form part of the District Council's or Community Safety Partnership's governance arrangements, it may be helpful if the LDC representative had a connection into the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for community safety issues (ie the Community, Housing and Health O&S Committee). Consequently, it is proposed that Councillors O'Hagan and Mrs Evans (both members of CHH O&S) be the District Council's representatives on the Panel. Representatives of the business community will be recruited by directly approaching the Chamber of Trade, a Magistrate is to be selected by the Bench Chairman for the area and County Council representatives are being dealt with at a county level.
- 5.4 Prospective Panel members including elected Member representatives will be asked to complete an application form and will be subject to a vetting process by Staffordshire Police.
- 5.5 Membership of the Panel will be for an initial 6 months, which will be followed by a review by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and the Panel chair. If all parties agree, membership will be extended for a further 6 months and will subsequently be reviewed annually. Membership will be limited to a maximum of 3 years from the date of original appointment. This is to ensure a degree of continuity of skills and experience, whilst also having in place a process to refresh the membership.

- 5.6 Panel meetings will be held quarterly at a time and venue to be determined by the Panel. Initially, meetings will not be open to the public however, it is expected that once the Panel is well established members of the public will be able to attend. There is an expectation that the minutes of each meeting will be published externally.
- 5.7 The LPT Commander will be responsible for reporting back to the Panel (and OPCC) with actions taken / not taken and with reasons.
- 5.8 A roll out programme has been produced by the OPCC with Lichfield included in Phase 2 starting which started in June. The recruitment stage for panel members began week commencing the 29<sup>th</sup> June and closes on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The initial meeting ideally will be held late September/early October 2015.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner will provide each area with £10,000 per annum, for three years to support the Panel delivery. This will fund the administration and facilitation of the Panels, including the development of the work plan, taking and publishing minutes and reports, venue hire and organising training for members. Arrangements for administering the Lichfield District Panel are currently under discussion.