

North Yorkshire Council

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on Monday, 7 July 2025, commencing at 10.30 am.

Councillors Peter Wilkinson in the Chair (North Yorkshire Council); Danny Myers ((Vice Chair) City of York Council), Chris Aldred (North Yorkshire Council), Lindsay Burr MBE (North Yorkshire Council), Melanie Davis (North Yorkshire Council), Heather Moorhouse (North Yorkshire Council), and Malcolm Taylor (North Yorkshire Council).

Community Co-opted Members: Fraser Forsyth, Mags Godderidge and Martin Walker.

Jo Coles (Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime).

Deputy Chief Constable Scott Bisset (North Yorkshire Police).

Officers from the Policing, Fire and Crime Team (YNYCA): Mark Ayres (Interim Director, Public Confidence), Tamara Stevens (Director of Delivery and Assurance).

Officers from the Mayoral Combined Authority: Rachel Antonelli (Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer).

Officers present: Will Baines (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Elizabeth Jackson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Diane Parsons (Principal Scrutiny Officer).

In attendance: Councillor Andy Paraskos (North Yorkshire Council), Zoë Metcalfe (former Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner).

Apologies: Councillors Tim Grogan, Michael Pavlovic and Steve Shaw-Wright.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

88 Election of Panel Chair

Resolved

That Councillor Peter Wilkinson be elected to serve as Chair until July 2026.

89 Apologies for absence

Councillor Peter Wilkinson in the Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Councillors Michael Pavlovic, Tim Grogan and Steve Shaw-Wright. It was noted that Councillor Melanie Davis was attending as a substitute for Councillor Shaw-Wright.

A welcome was extended to Councillor Andy Paraskos (NYC) and former Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Zoë Metcalfe, who were also in attendance to observe the meeting.

90 Declarations of Interest

Mags Godderidge notified that she is CEO of Survive, which receives funding for its work from the Deputy Mayor.

Martin Walker notified that he is a Trustee of IDAS; a charity which receives funding from the Deputy Mayor's office.

91 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 1 May 2025

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st May 2025, having been printed and circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

92 Election of Vice Chair to the Panel

Resolved

That Councillor Danny Myers is elected Vice Chair of the Panel, to serve until July 2026.

93 Progress on Issues Raised by the Panel

Resolved

That the report is noted.

94 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel

The Panel were advised that no questions or statements had been received.

95 Members' Questions

In response to a query regarding the effectiveness of the collaboration between policing and fire services, the Deputy Mayor spoke to how things had progressed and that it was key to ensure arrangements work well for York and North Yorkshire. Yorkshire Ambulance Service has also been brought into discussions by the Deputy Mayor as regards blue-light collaboration.

The Deputy Mayor was asked about delays to fire vehicles where railway crossing barriers are down in relation to whether data is collected on the impact of this and whether technology can be improved to assist. The Chief Fire Officer advised that data is not collected specifically on delays due to railway crossing barriers, although if it were felt that this was becoming an issue then the service would look to do this.

Concerns were raised by the Panel around police officers attending hospital with individuals in custody for lengthy periods, following recent observations in York by a Panel Member. In response, the Deputy Mayor and DCC Bisset spoke to the heavily-regulated regime around duty of care for those in custody but also to the ongoing conversations with health partners to explore whether anything can be done to alleviate pressures.

HMICFRS report on Effectiveness, Efficiency and People at North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service 2023-25

Considered

The report of the Deputy Mayor regarding the outcomes of the recent inspection of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service by HMICFRS.

The Panel commended the fire and rescue service and Deputy Mayor on the positive report from the inspectorate and the improvements made since the previous inspection a few years ago. The Deputy Mayor also commended the work of the former Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Zoe Metcalfe, and the Chief Fire officer thanked service staff for their work.

Members asked about cost recovery for automatic alarm callouts as while the policy is in place, recovery hasn't been implemented. The Chief Fire Officer felt that engagement with the business community is a key strength and while the service will retain the potential to charge, success is measured around securing engagement. Where needed, prosecutions will be applied where businesses do not comply with the law.

The Deputy Mayor was asked about the delay to implementation of some duty systems. In response, the Deputy Mayor spoke to the need to bring people with you as part of any change and that risks must continue to be assessed so that the system implemented can respond effectively. In relation to Harrogate area specifically, it was highlighted that the service has reached agreement with the trade unions on the changes so these can be implemented.

In response to a query as to whether the service uses staff appraisals appropriately, the Chief Fire Officer spoke to how the organisation has developed so that reviews help to drive forward improvement. The Panel also asked about data management and how it is used to drive decisions. A data dashboard has been developed to enable a more meaningful analysis. The Deputy Mayor highlighted that data packs are available to view for her Online Public Meetings.

The Panel considered the issue of financial sustainability of the service and plans to invest further in the estate. Members also asked about the increase in longer term sickness absence and strategies for addressing this to bring down costs. The Deputy Mayor underlined the need for investment in staff and workplace conditions and the Chief Fire Officer highlighted work underway with the trade union on a capability policy.

Members asked the Deputy Mayor about the tool used for dynamic mobilisation of cover and sought reassurance that redeployments aren't routine. The CFO offered to provide more detail and reassurance around use of the tool outside of the Panel meeting for Members.

Members highlighted that while many of the Panel view the Deputy Mayor's Online Public Meetings and are aware of the material taken to those meetings, it's important for the Panel to be approached as a separate entity. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the Deputy Mayor to provide service performance packs for the Panel where it's anticipated that there will be questions on issues of performance.

The Panel asked about investment in fire stations, particularly Malton, to help reduce inequalities. It was highlighted in response that the service is committed to a ten-year plan which will ensure improvements to Malton and two other stations.

Resolved

That the Panel notes the report provided.

97

Neighbourhood Policing Strategy

Considered

The report of the Deputy Mayor regarding developments in neighbourhood policing in North Yorkshire.

The Chair extended thanks on behalf of the Panel to the Chief Constable and those officers who provided an informal briefing for the Panel recently, including on neighbourhood policing. Members had been impressed by the commitment of officers and particularly the work being undertaken around neighbourhood policing in Scarborough.

As a result of funding from the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee there will be 32 more police constables and 20 new Police Community Support Officers in the force area. The Deputy Mayor highlighted that these posts will be funded in a sustainable way.

In response to a query around how the effectiveness of the strategy will be measured, DCC Bisset underlined the key indicators of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour effectively, in addition to gauging public confidence and asking the public how effective their local team is. The service will continue to be assessed by the inspectorate against the seven pillars.

The Panel asked about anti-social behaviour in York and tackling 'hot spots'. The service is using Safer Streets funding and have a new tool which drills down to micro ward level to help identify problem areas and resource accordingly. The Panel subsequently discussed with the Deputy Mayor and DCC Bisset around sources of local intelligence and the importance of partnership working between neighbourhood teams and local councils, parish and town councils, BIDs and others. Concern was expressed by Members around the lack of funding expected to come to North Yorkshire following the government announcement in March around additional funds to tackle rural and wildlife crime. The importance of the work of the Rural Task Force was acknowledged in tackling rural crime.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Mayor for the report and suggested that an update be provided once further work has been undertaken in York and Scarborough around the 'Clear, Hold, Build' model and once communities have observed the results of the developing strategy.

Resolved

That the Panel:

- (a) notes the report provided; and
- (b) receives a further report updating on the progress of the neighbourhood policing strategy in due course.

At 12:05pm the Chair adjourned the meeting for a short break. Cllr Burr left the meeting. The meeting reconvened at 12:15pm with Item 11.

98

Management of Complaints Regarding North Yorkshire Police

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Considered

The report of the Deputy Mayor regarding the management of police complaints in North Yorkshire.

The Chair highlighted that the Panel requested this update report following the outcomes of the recent inspection report on integrity arrangements. The Panel has also received a number of complaints recently from members of the public regarding the timeliness of response to complaints about the police, both from within the police service and from the dedicated team sitting within the Deputy Mayor's office (the Policing, Fire and Crime Team).

The Deputy Mayor highlighted the national context and that the increase in police complaints is a problem across the country. North Yorkshire is one of only two Model 3 areas but a number of other Commissioners are considering this due to concerns about the level of oversight. The Deputy Mayor commended the Policing, Fire and Crime Team (PFC Team) for their work in bringing down the backlog and highlighted that there have been improvements to the process within Professional Standards at the force, too.

Mark Ayres provided Panel with an overview of the complaints process. In July 2024, 667 new cases required allocation by the PFC Team with a backlog of approximately 11 months. As of June 2025, 151 cases required allocation with the oldest complaint dating from March 2025. Following the HMI inspection earlier this year, the PFC team are now dip sampling what's in the queue awaiting local resolution to check that nothing is waiting to go to Professional Standards. No concerns have been identified in this respect since the team has been dip sampling. There has been an increase in staffing to the PFC Team to help provide resilience.

In response to a Member query, the Deputy Mayor acknowledged that opportunities for wider learning from complaints received about the force had previously been missed and that this is an area of development. DCC Bisset expanded further that the service has not just wanted to focus on reducing a backlog but on understanding why people are complaining, about whom and what some of those identified behaviours look like. The police service has developed a data dashboard about the nature of complaints, thematics and which areas/teams they relate to and so on.

DCC Bisset highlighted that there are currently around 112 complaints sat within Professional Standards (PSD), some of which may be more serious and more difficult to resolve. It was acknowledged that some of these have taken too long to resolve/finalise and as such there is a dedicated inspector now in place with a small team to help give greater consistency and oversight. Some of the complaints will be diverted to geographic areas to resolve.

A Member raised concerns that the latest complaints handling figures for North Yorkshire for the reporting period April 2024 to March 2025 as published by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) indicate that it too the service on average 63 working days to log complaints as compared with a seven-day average nationally. Furthermore, that it took 56 working days to contact complainants, as compared with nine working days nationally. The Deputy Mayor highlighted that she has regular meetings with a member of the IOPC's performance team and requested that the data highlighted by the Panel be shared to enable reflection and a more thorough response.

It was agreed that the Panel would be provided with the proportion of complaints deemed serious enough to be directed to PSD.

The Deputy Mayor also reiterated that she is happy to meet with parish and town councils where there are concerns about complaints handling. It was noted that Haxby Town Council had corresponded around a delay in complaints handling and that the Deputy Mayor would follow this up in writing.

The Panel asked the Deputy Mayor about the impact on PSD of delays in initial handling of complaints by the PFC Team. The Deputy Mayor felt reassured that cases requiring prosecution are being dealt with in a timely way and that there is some learning around complaints, however also acknowledged that quality of response is an area of development generally.

Resolved

That the Panel:

- (a) notes the report provided;
- (b) receives a further update from the Deputy Mayor regarding the IOPC-reported figures on complaints handling in North Yorkshire; and
- (c) takes a further progress update on complaints handling in six to nine months.

99

Any other items

The Chair determined that 'Any other business' would be taken at this point in the meeting to enable the Deputy Mayor and colleagues to depart for another commitment.

The Deputy Mayor highlighted that the public consultation on the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is going live week commencing 7 July and Panel members were urged to look at this and respond. The CRMP will look at service plans for the fire service for the next few years. Two specific proposals concern extending the current policy of not attending automatic fire alarms at commercial buildings where no one sleeps from 12 hours to 24 hours a day and replacing just one of the two water bowsers in place currently.

Resolved

That the Panel notes the update provided on the CRMP and the request to respond to the survey.

At this point in the meeting, the Deputy Mayor, DCC Bisset and MCA colleagues left the meeting.

100

Draft Policing and Crime Annual Report 2024/25

Considered

The Mayor's draft Policing and Crime Annual Report 2024/25.

The Panel discussed the Mayor's draft report and suggested some specific points for further consideration regarding the content, to be put forward in the Panel's statutory report to the Mayor.

Resolved

That the Panel supports the Mayor's draft Policing and Crime Annual Report

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2024/25, on the basis that its recommendations are considered further.

101 Draft Fire and Rescue Annual Report 2024/25

Considered

The Mayor's draft Fire and Rescue Annual Report 2024/25.

The Panel discussed the Mayor's draft report and suggested some specific points for further consideration regarding the content, to be put forward in the Panel's statutory report to the Mayor.

Resolved

That the Panel supports the Mayor's draft Fire and Rescue Annual Report 2024/25, on the basis that its recommendations are considered further.

102 Work Programme

Resolved

That the Panel notes the outline programme of work for 2025/26.

103 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 8 October 2025 at 10:30am – City of York Council's West Offices.

The Chair highlighted that Councillor Taylor would be stepping down from the Panel due to his recent appointment to the North Yorkshire Council Executive and thanked him for his valuable contribution to the Panel.

The meeting concluded at 1:17pm.
DP.