

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 21st July, 2022, commencing at 10.30 am.

Councillors Carl Les (North Yorkshire County Council) in the Chair; Keith Aspden (City of York Council), Peter Wilkinson (Hambleton District Council), Lindsay Burr MBE (Ryedale District Council), Mike Chambers MBE (Harrogate Borough Council), Tim Grogan (Selby District Council) and Darryl Smalley (City of York Council).

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

In attendance via MS Teams: Zoë Metcalfe (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire), Councillor Helen Grant (Richmondshire District Council); Mags Godderidge (Community Co-opted)

Jonathan Dyson (Chief Fire Officer) (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

Lisa Winward (Chief Constable) (North Yorkshire Police).

Officers from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner: Caroline Blackburn (Asst Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer), Tom Thorp (Asst Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer) and Simon Dennis (Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer).

Officers present: Diane Parsons (Principal Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Eric Jaquin (Craven District Council) and Carl Maw (Scarborough Borough Council).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

608 Election of Panel Chair

(i) Considered -

The guidance note at Item 1 in support of the election of Panel Chair, which proposes that the tenure of Panel Chair runs until the first Panel meeting after May 2023.

Diane Parsons introduced the paper, advising that the slight change in tenure would align with the formalisation of appointments to the Panel next year from both North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council.

Resolved –

That the Panel Chair is elected to serve until the first Panel meeting after May 2023.

(ii) Panel Members were then invited to give nominations for the election of Panel Chair.

Resolved –

That Councillor Carl Les be elected to serve as Chair until the first Panel meeting

after May 2023.

609 Welcome and apologies

Councillor Carl Les in the Chair.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that the Commissioner, Councillor Grant and Mags Godderidge were joining remotely. Apologies were noted.

610 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Keith Aspden notified that he is a Member of the LGA's Fire Services Management Committee and Fire Commission, and the NJC for Local Authority Fire Services. Martin Walker notified that he is a Trustee of IDAS. Mags Godderidge notified that she is the Chief Executive Officer of Survive.

611 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 25th May 2022

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th May 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

612 Election of Vice Chairs to the Panel

(i) Considered-

The guidance provided at Item 5 in support of the election of Panel Vice Chair, proposing that the tenure for Vice Chair runs until the first Panel meeting after May 2023.

Diane Parsons highlighted that this slight change would align with the agreement made for the tenure of Chair at Item 1 and would ensure that a further election could be held at the first opportunity following Local Government Reorganisation and elections in the City of York.

Resolved-

That the Panel agrees to elect two Vice Chairs to serve until the first Panel meeting after May 2023.

(ii) The Chair then invited nominations for two Vice Chairs to the Panel, representing the district/borough councils and City of York Council.

Resolved-

That Councillor Peter Wilkinson and Councillor Keith Aspden be elected to serve as Vice Chairs until the first Panel meeting after May 2023.

613 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel

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

614 Members' Questions

The Commissioner was asked what is being done about anti-social behaviour Norton. In response, the Commissioner highlighted that she would be happy to advise after the meeting on specific details of local action being taken.

The Commissioner was thanked for her support of the residents of Linton-on-Ouse and asked if the plans for an asylum reception centre in the village do go ahead, whether there will be appropriate resources to adequately police the area and allay the fears of residents. The Commissioner responded that she was very hopeful of adequate policing resource but that the police are waiting to hear back on the decision.

A Member referred to the issues experienced at Richmond Falls during the extreme hot weather, whereby the police in situ did a good job trying to manage the situation, but were overwhelmed by hundreds of people and a lot of disorder. The Commissioner was asked about availability of additional police officers on another such hot day. The Commissioner advised that she would be happy to meet on-site about this issue and that the Chief Constable is looking arrangements that might assist with these gatherings.

615 HMICFRS National Child Protection Inspection of North Yorkshire Police (item deferred from May 2022)

Considered –

The Commissioner's report regarding the response to the HMICFRS national child protection inspection report, published in March 2022.

The Commissioner highlighted both her and the Chief Constable's disappointment at the report but that the areas identified for immediate action have been addressed and other areas are underway. The Commissioner is holding a Public Accountability Meeting later today to update on this issue and to enable the public to ask further questions. The Commissioner feels assured that everything is being done to protect children in the force area.

Members highlighted concern by the low standards of some of the investigations referenced in the report and that some were also supervised badly. It was also noted with concern that the service is relying on distance learning packages to train officers. It was further identified that a Direct Entry route may mean officers becoming involved in investigations with little or no prior policing experience.

In response to these concerns, the Chief Constable advised that North Yorkshire Police are looking at Direct Entry for detectives from next year. Entrants now spend a more significant period of time in hubs in CID learning about investigations. Additionally, it was highlighted that there are specialist detectives working in agencies such as HMRC who can join the police service and do a very competent job at investigations without any prior policing experience. It was clarified that every officer receives face-to-face training on investigations and some interactive follow-up training is done remotely.

The Commissioner was asked about how the inspectorate's recommendations regarding embedding the voice of the child more in investigations is being taken forward. The Panel heard that the Youth Commission have been part of this

process. The police now ensure that it is not only specially-trained officers who interview a child but that all officers receive training and have an aide memoire on signs to look out for in a house call generally that might suggest neglect or abuse for example. The Chief Constable advised that she would welcome further conversations with partner agencies around how quickly intelligence is being acted upon when it comes in as protection requires a swift partnership approach.

The Commissioner was asked whether she is reassured that there is sufficient capacity and adequately skilled officers to take on investigations. The Commissioner acknowledged gaps in resourcing but that every effort is being made to ensure this is the focus. The Chief Constable highlighted that around a third of detective posts are currently vacant in the service, but that officers can retire and re-join the service and they are looking at ways to retain people in the organisation. It is no longer possible to allocate someone to an investigation without the requisite skills.

The Commissioner was asked about the timescales for a repeat inspection by HMICFRS. The Panel were advised that HMICFRS have indicated that they are already assured at the initial response to the report but it isn't known when or how long the inspection will take. A full PEEL inspection will take place in the autumn.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the report provided; and
- (b) Receives an update report from the Commissioner in six months' time.

616

Risk and Resource Model for North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Considered –

The Commissioner's proposals for the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service as highlighted through the public consultation on the Risk and Resource Model (RRM).

The Commissioner outlined the work undertaken to develop the detailed risk profile for North Yorkshire, which formed the basis of the proposals developed around resourcing. The Commissioner outlined the engagement undertaken with communities and key stakeholders as part of the consultation process. The final Risk and Resource Model will be taken for agreement to the Executive Board in September.

The service was thanked by York members of the Panel following the major incident being called over the last few days following the extremely hot weather. However, it was highlighted that this had demonstrated the importance of resilience both nationally and locally. Concerns were outlined around the proposals impacting Huntington (York) and south Ryedale, and that a unanimous motion had been passed at City of York Council recently against the proposals. Members expressed that the problems facing the service are not just local and are long-term challenges requiring greater precept flexibility. The Commissioner was asked what she intends to do to ensure that concerns around national funding and precept flexibility are heard in relation to the diminished response times proposed for Huntington. It was also highlighted to the Commissioner that while the consultation document refers to up to a 4-minute delay in response from Huntington in the future, the FBU has said that the delay could realistically be up to 16 minutes. The Commissioner was asked for clarification.

In response, the Commissioner thanked the Panel for their input earlier this year into

the dialogue with government around precept flexibility, which also included all North Yorkshire and York MPs. The Home Office came up in March to look around fire stations and there has also been a recent HMI inspection. The Commissioner has also met with the FBU, Rachael Maskell MP and the Home Secretary to put financial concerns forward. The Commissioner believes that the government is now looking at the funding formula for fire and rescue. However, the Commissioner was keen to clarify that the RRM is not about cuts as although the budget is tight it is balanced. She would therefore still be progressing this exercise as the service needs to understand where the greatest risks to service are and to ensure that resources are in the right place. The Commissioner particularly wants to address issues around On-call recruitment and how best to reinvest the £1.5m identified over the next few years.

In relation to the Huntington response times and FBU figures, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) advised that these represented one incident and that the service extended to a five-year review of data to go beyond the Covid-19 period. It was acknowledged that for communities, response times are important but that the service needs to focus work with communities on fire prevention and safety. Communities anticipate that additional housing developments and road networks represent greater fire risk but the CFO expressed that statistically, these are the safest networks and smoke alarms are hard-wired into new housing. The CFO referenced the need for culture change around equalities and inclusion and that training all officers in seeing 'the person' more holistically will help to support identification and tackling of risk.

Notwithstanding the responses provided by the CFO and Commissioner, Members expressed that there remain strong views from residents across York and over 1000 people have signed a petition regarding the proposals. The Commissioner was asked if she has taken into account the importance of Huntington as a strategic location, with a new community stadium and growing communities in the north area, as well as proximity to the A64, which has a poor accident record. The Commissioner was also asked if the MoD had been approached in relation to Strensall barracks and the number of fire incidents.

The CFO responded that the risk plan takes into account business and local infrastructure and that things like the new stadium represent a very low fire risk. Large gatherings require resilience planning with partners as a matter of course. Careful analysis was undertaken regarding the A64 and it was acknowledged that education of individuals for accident prevention is key. The Commissioner acknowledged the concerns of local residents in the Strensall area regarding the potential for fires on the common in the dry season and that she is happy to have further conversations on this locally.

Members expressed similar concerns regarding the proposals for Harrogate and Scarborough, particularly around increasing development in Harrogate district and neighbouring towns, along with the rurality of the district presenting specific problems. The Commissioner was asked whether the recent extreme weather has led to a need to re-assess the risk model for the area. The CFO commented that the multi-agency response had worked well the last few days and calling a major incident brought in more support. The CFO felt the RRM approach will assist with tackling wildfires in terms of more officers and the right appliances in the right areas. The Panel heard also that the investment in On-Call across the county will also significantly help ensure a greater level of fire cover.

The Commissioner was asked whether there is, or could be, a charging mechanism put in place regarding false alarms. The Commissioner would like to work with businesses further to understanding why this is happening and for the fire service to help educate. Some fire services have started to charge but this hasn't necessarily resulted in a decrease in false alarms.

In response to a query regarding the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) from the Panel, the Commissioner provided reassurance that the RRM will tie in activity with the LRF.

Resolved –

That the Panel will formulate a response to the Commissioner's public consultation on the Risk and Resource Model, based on the views expressed by Panel members at the meeting.

617 Draft Policing and Crime Annual Report 2021/22

Considered –

The Commissioner's draft Annual Report for Policing and Crime 2021/22.

In opening up for Panel comments, the Chair acknowledged the Commissioner's difficulty in presenting draft Annual Reports which need to adequately represent the tenure of three Commissioners and one Acting Commissioner within the same reporting period.

Members were keen to obtain further detail around the York Priorities listed in the draft report, which indicated a steep decrease in anti-social behaviour (-32%) and a 32% increase in violence. Members also asked the Commissioner if it would be possible to understand what percentage of violent crimes were linked to violence against women and girls and it was agreed that this information would be provided subsequently.

There were additionally a couple of further points raised by Members seeking further clarification, as outlined below:

- The number of police officers on page 18 (from Home Office figures) at December 2021 were 1,563. However, page 28 highlights that numbers of officers are "now in excess of 1,600";
- Page 18 of the draft report refers to the police officer uplift programme providing a means of enhancing diversity in the service, particularly in areas such as the firearms department, which the report states has traditionally struggled to recruit a diverse workforce. Members queried whether it would necessarily follow that there would be a diversity of recruited officers directly into firearms as this is a more specialist area.

The Commissioner agreed to provide further information on the queries raised, after the meeting.

Resolved –

That the Panel recommends that the draft Policing and Crime Annual Report 2021/22 be approved, subject to the Commissioner's further consideration of the issues raised.

618 Draft Fire and Rescue Annual Report 2021/22

Considered –

The Commissioner's draft Annual Report for Policing and Fire 2021/22.

A couple of areas of the draft report raised particular queries and suggestions from the Panel, as follows:

- Within Priority 3 in relation to enhancing the diversity of the workforce, it was felt that some of the objectives outlined would benefit from being strengthened, and it was suggested that more could be done to outline the volume of work underway in this area, which is currently not apparent;
- In relation to the Performance section on page 25 of the draft, Members suggested it may be helpful to include incident data for 2019/20 in order to compare with the pre-Covid picture for fire incidents;
- Members noted the reference on page 18 to the Direct Entry Scheme and would welcome further information in the future to better understand how this works and to review whether it brings about the benefits identified.

The Commissioner agreed to give further consideration to these points and to provide further detail where relevant.

Resolved –

That the Panel recommends that the draft Fire and Rescue Annual Report 2021/22 be approved, subject to the Commissioner's further consideration of the issues raised.

619

Review of proportionality of Panel membership and preparation for Local Government Reorganisation in North Yorkshire

Considered –

The report of the Panel Secretariat regarding the balanced appointment objective, the impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on Panel membership and proposals for changes post-LGR to ensure that the balanced appointment objective is met.

Members agreed that it would be pragmatic not to pursue making further changes to the current Panel membership for the purposes of achieving the balanced appointment objective; mindful that there will be considerable change to the Panel as a result of LGR next year and it would be helpful to retain the current knowledge and experience of Members during this transitional period.

Members noted the suggestions outlined in the paper regarding future political proportionality, considerations around weighting of seats between York and North Yorkshire post-LGR and for reducing the number of Vice Chairs to one (post-LGR). It was emphasised that decisions regarding appointments will ultimately need to be made by City of York Council and North Yorkshire Council and that this could not be done until the new North Yorkshire Council has its AGM and the City of York elections have taken place, both in May 2023.

It was agreed that a small focus group of Panel members will be formed towards the end of the financial year, to take forward further consideration of the issues outlined in the report.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the current position as regards political proportionality on the Panel but makes no further changes at this time;
- (b) Forms a focus group in 2023 to give further consideration to the impact of LGR on the Panel.

620 Annual Report of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel 2021/22

Considered –

The draft Annual Report of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel 2021/22.

Diane Parsons outlined that while there have been various configurations of an 'annual report' as such in the past, these have not been formalised through the wider Panel. The Home Office have highlighted that they see production of an Annual Report as a key deliverable for Panels in relation to assessing performance against the grant received. As such, Members were asked to approve the draft provided, which will be published.

Members felt the draft accurately reflected the work of the Panel over the last year and agreed that any further comments may be fed back after the meeting for inclusion, if required.

Resolved –

That the Panel approves its draft Annual Report 2021/22.

621 Work Programme

Considered –

The report from the Panel Secretariat, outlining options for an approach to future work programming.

Diane Parsons outlined the two options; retain the current blended approach to Panel agendas or take a more thematic approach to scrutiny which aligns with exploring issues related to the Commissioner's four CARE principles. Members favoured the latter approach. It was agreed that this could be trialled for a year to see if Members feel it benefits the scrutiny process.

Resolved –

That the Panel adopts a more thematic approach to its forward work programme, aligned with the Commissioner's CARE principles.

622 Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman, should, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

The Panel were advised that no urgent business had been notified to the Chair.

The meeting concluded at 12.47 pm.
DP.