

North Yorkshire Council

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held at Selby Civic Centre on Thursday, 1 May 2025, commencing at 10.30 am.

Councillors Peter Wilkinson in the Chair (North Yorkshire Council); Danny Myers ((Vice Chair) City of York Council), Lindsay Burr MBE (North Yorkshire Council), Felicity Cunliffe-Lister (North Yorkshire Council), Tim Grogan (North Yorkshire Council), Emilie Knight (City of York Council), Heather Moorhouse (North Yorkshire Council), Michael Pavlovic (City of York Council), Steve Shaw-Wright (North Yorkshire Council) and Malcolm Taylor (North Yorkshire Council).

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

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

Officers from the Policing, Fire and Crime Team (YNYCA): Jenni Newberry (Director of Commissioning, Criminal Justice and Partnerships) and Tamara Stevens (Director of Delivery and Assurance).

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

Officers present: Diane Parsons (North Yorkshire Council).

In attendance: Councillor George Jabbour (North Yorkshire Council)

Apologies: (From the Panel) Councillor Chris Aldred and Mags Godderidge.
(From the YNYCA) Michael Porter and Mike Russell.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

76 Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. From the Panel side, apologies were noted from Councillor Chris Aldred and Mags Godderidge. It was noted that Councillor Felicity Cunliffe-Lister was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Aldred. From the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) side, apologies were noted from Michael Porter and Mike Russell.

77 Declarations of Interest

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

78 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 6th February 2025

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2025, having been printed and circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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79 Progress on Issues Raised by the Panel

Considered

The update report from the Panel Secretariat regarding progress made against issues raised previously by the Panel.

The Chair highlighted that further to discussions at the previous Panel meeting regarding safety concerns about planning applications for battery storage facilities, there had been follow-up with officers from North Yorkshire Council's (NYC's) Planning service on the potential for consistent engagement between Planning and the Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS). Planning representatives from NYC and NYFRS have met to review the process. It has been agreed that a protocol will be developed on how both will work together, drawing on best practice and the latest understanding of the technology. Both parties will consider involving neighbouring authorities if possible. The Deputy Mayor has also had similar discussions with colleagues at NYFRS and echoed that the dialogue has been positive, albeit there is no statutory guidance on this area at present. NYFRS are not a statutory consultee on such matters so a local protocol will support consistent engagement.

The Panel also highlighted concerns regarding the additional data provided at Appendix A in relation to call abandonment for the 101 service outside of the SLA. The Deputy Mayor felt that the ongoing trend of the data is positive and that a regular review is taken of these figures at Online Public Meetings every two months. The Deputy Mayor would be happy for Panel members to feed in to that process and some positive individual feedback was also provided by a Panel Member in relation to recent usage of the 101 service.

Resolved

That Members note the update report provided and that all actions have been completed.

80 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel

No questions or statements had been received by the Panel.

81 Members' Questions

The Deputy Mayor had been provided with an advance question regarding her assurance that the new Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in York is meeting her strategic aims. The Deputy Mayor had provided a written overview. As a follow-up, the Deputy Mayor was asked about referrals for therapeutic help and support. It was agreed that figures would be obtained regarding referrals to the SARC as well as to other commissioned services providing this support.

A Member had also asked a question regarding the detection rate for dwelling and non-residential burglaries in the force area. The Panel were advised that there had been a small rise (2.3%) in dwelling burglaries but others were down by 5%. Detection rates are up 3.5% on the previous year – and in fact all crime type detection is up - so the Deputy Mayor felt reassured that the police service is performing well. All such data is available in the Online Public Meeting performance packs.

A question was raised by a Panel member regarding the recent Supreme Court ruling on the legal definition of a woman and whether the police service has ensured that its policies and procedures adequately align with that ruling. The Deputy Mayor provided a response from North Yorkshire Police (NYP) to the effect that this impacts several areas of policing such as custody, searching of detainees and suspects and recording of data. NYP has undertaken an initial review but will ensure full compliance with the ruling across all policies and procedures. The Deputy Mayor is anticipating further guidance from the National Police Chiefs' Council and offered to provide a written update on that for Panel in due course.

As a linked query, the Deputy Mayor was asked if she was able to provide some reassurance to residents around management of potential tensions following the ruling and the potential for additional instances of hate crime. The Deputy Mayor will continue to monitor this, along with police and fire service colleagues and it is also monitored through the community safety partnerships.

The Chair highlighted that there have been complaints to the Panel regarding the length of time taken on the adjudication of police complaint outcomes – sometimes up to twelve months - and asked the Deputy Mayor to reflect on this when preparing the report for Panel in July. The Deputy Mayor highlighted that the backlog has come down significantly and more capacity has been put into the complaints team. The Deputy Mayor also sought to reassure that the most serious complaint issues are triaged at point of entry to the team.

The Panel asked about the progress being made to tackle retail crime and whether the Deputy Mayor is looking to work collaboratively with councils and others on this issue. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged the increase in retail crime in the last year and that it is a priority for the Mayor. Work is underway to streamline processes for businesses. The Safer Streets mission will ensure a more joined-up approach to tackling retail crime and the additional money to the neighbourhood policing budget will ensure greater support.

Members sought assurance from the Deputy Mayor that there is capability and capacity to deal with bush/moorland fires in view of the dry start to the year and the emerging rural fires. The Deputy Mayor urged the public to follow the NYFRS advice given to avoid fires occurring. The Deputy Mayor has suggested a rural forum for fire issues as there is for rural crime and is conscious that large landowners often have access to supplies to complement the resources of NYFRS, so the additional resilience needs to be developed in communities.

A Member asked about the departure of the Corporate Director for Policing, Fire and Crime from the MCA earlier this year and whom Members should contact routinely on matters which that postholder would previously have attended to. Rachel Antonelli spoke to the work underway at the MCA to consider the structure and remove duplication as the role undertaken previously by the Corporate Director does not exist in the current structure. Two officers have been appointed as Deputy Monitoring Officer in the meantime (Tamara Stevens and Paul Clark). A further update will be available for the next Panel meeting.

Concerns were raised by a Panel member in relation to the time spent by police officers escorting individuals under arrest to hospital for treatment, citing an individual case of an officer recently spending around eleven hours at York Hospital. The Deputy Mayor is in ongoing discussions with health colleagues around ensuring there is capacity in the system to attend to these cases in a timely way.

The Deputy Mayor was also asked whether she is aware of the role of fire breaks in terms of ensuring an impact on handling wild fires and whether this could be raised

with NYFRS. The Deputy Mayor agreed to raise this with the Chief Fire Officer.

Resolved

That the Panel will receive:

- (a) data regarding referrals for therapeutic support for victims to the SARC and other services;
- (b) further information in due course on the guidance from the NPCC for policing in light of the recent Supreme Court ruling; and
- (c) further information regarding changes to the organisational structure and senior roles at the MCA for the next Panel meeting.

82

Progress Report on Tackling Rural and Wildlife Crime

Considered

The report of the Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime on how rural and wildlife crime is being tackled.

As part of the introduction to this report, the Deputy Mayor highlighted the recognised good practice led through the area Rural Task Force (RTF), including the fact that poaching is down 61% in the last three years as a result of their work.

Panel members highlighted that they would benefit from more specific data being included within the report, particularly in terms of arrests and convictions. The Deputy Mayor offered to provide a further briefing on the RTF, although it was noted that Panel members will be receiving an informal briefing on this and other matters shortly.

The Deputy Mayor was asked about the illegal dumping of rubbish on agricultural land and whether she is satisfied that there are joined-up discussions taking place on this between councils, the police and Environment Agency. The Deputy Mayor highlighted that the issue was raised recently at the National Rural Crime Network (NRCN) and that she would be happy to convene a meeting on this if necessary to progress things among agencies. This was welcomed by the Panel.

The Panel asked whether the Deputy Mayor is satisfied that there are sufficient resources within the RTF to tackle rural crime effectively. In response, the Panel's attention was drawn to the fact that crimes are going down although resources will continue to be monitored. The additional neighbourhood policing resources planned will help to support rural communities.

A Member asked about hunting with hounds in relation to the police's prioritisation of enforcement of the current legislation and also the service's preparedness for a potential extension to the legislation to help protect against the possibility of trail hunting being used as a smokescreen. The Deputy Mayor agreed to provide further data to help the Panel to understand NYP's performance, including whether benchmarking is undertaken against other forces.

The Deputy Mayor was asked about the government announcement of £800,000 to tackle rural and wildlife crime, namely how much of this will come to North Yorkshire and whether it will be repeated. The Deputy Mayor felt that the funding was focussed around cross-border crime impacting rural communities and supporting the wider NRCN. It is unlikely to involve a bidding process but it was agreed that this would be clarified. It was felt unlikely to be a repeated source of funding.

Panel highlighted the poor reputation of North Yorkshire in relation to raptor persecution and that engagement with the RTF previously had highlighted the difficulties in securing prosecutions. This appeared to have centred around CPS concerns on the potential costs of bringing a prosecution, the fact that estates involved were likely to employ Queen's Counsel (at that time) and that the cost of bringing the prosecution would be too high. The Deputy Mayor agreed to pursue further conversations on this with the CPS. Further to a request it was also agreed that the Deputy Mayor would provide Panel with data on the number of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) that have been issued for wildlife crimes in the last two years.

A Panel member raised concern regarding a seeming lack of police powers in legislation to be able to seize firearms and shotguns to prevent crime. A number of related queries were put, namely how many crimes are committed with firearms, how many instances of threats have there been with firearms, how does this affect domestic violence (for example where a firearm is used as a threat) and how many seizures have there been of firearms/shotguns. The Deputy Mayor welcomed the conversation in the context of domestic abuse in rural areas and agreed to look at the data for the next meeting.

It was agreed that the Panel will revisit this item on its work programme next year. It was also agreed that the Panel could contact the RTF again to arrange for contextual briefing/visits going forward.

Resolved

That the Panel:

- (a) Will receive further data regarding NYP's performance on the enforcement of legislation for hunting with hounds;
- (b) Will receive clarification regarding the government funding to tackle rural and wildlife crime;
- (c) Will receive a further update from the Deputy Mayor following conversations with the CPS on securing prosecutions for wildlife crime (especially raptor persecutions);
- (d) Will receive data on the number of CBOs issued as a sanction for wildlife crime in the last two years; and
- (e) Will receive an update for the next meeting in relation to a number of queries on the link between the prevalence of firearms and domestic violence.

83

Report on Tackling Domestic Violence in Rural Areas

Considered

The report of the Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime regarding tackling domestic abuse in rural areas.

By way of introduction, the Deputy Mayor referred to levels of under-reporting and ensuring that rural spaces are reached through commissioned services as well as partnership working with the farming community.

The Deputy Mayor was asked about the data provided and whether it reflects that more disclosures are being made on historical cases or whether domestic violence is more prevalent now. The Deputy Mayor felt that the national focus given to this is likely leading to greater reporting. It was highlighted to the Panel that Derbyshire has done a piece of work around the challenges for victims in a rural setting, to raise awareness, and that something similar could be commissioned for North Yorkshire.

The Deputy Mayor agreed to share the link to the work with the Panel.

Concern was raised by a member regarding the fact that Survive has had to close its waiting list for self-referrals due to lack of funding. The Deputy Mayor was asked if she was satisfied with the level of provision available to victims. The Deputy Mayor offered to come back in writing outside of the Panel in due course due to the contractual nature of the query, although Panel were invited to note that referrals may still channel through the Supporting Victims team for counselling provision.

Members invited the Deputy Mayor to make representations to government and rural counterparts that when an individual is arrested under suspicion of rape or serious sexual violence that their firearms are removed. The Panel has previously been advised that this is a matter for individual forces and sergeants but it was felt to be a matter of national policy. The Deputy Mayor agreed to collaborate with the Panel on this issue to ask what consideration is being given to the point at which this is done once someone is arrested.

Reference was made by a Panel member to the report 'Captive and Controlled' on rural domestic abuse, led by a former Commissioner of North Yorkshire and that a recent BBC report indicated that while reporting of crime is higher, conviction rates are very low. The Deputy Mayor was asked to what extent the police are responsible for these low conviction figures and what she proposes in terms of ensuring the police take all steps required to improve the current rate. It was agreed that the Deputy Mayor would come back in writing on this.

A member highlighted the importance of recognising Selby and Scarborough as part of the figures provided and that a large proportion of North Yorkshire is in fact rural.

Resolved

That the Panel will:

- (a) receive information on the work commissioned through Derbyshire on domestic abuse in rural areas;
- (b) collaborate with the Deputy Mayor on seeking government's consideration of removal of firearms from individuals who are arrested on suspicion of rape or serious sexual violence; and
- (c) receive a written response regarding the extent to which the police are responsible for low conviction rates for domestic violence and how the Deputy Mayor is ensuring steps are taken forward to improve this.

84 Draft Annual Report of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel 2024/25

Considered

The Panel's draft Annual Report 2024/25.

The Deputy Mayor offered to provide a few small, factual observations via email for the report. Members thanked the Panel Secretariat for the report and broader support to the Panel.

Resolved

That the Panel approves its Annual Report 2024/25, subject to minor amendments.

85 Work Programme

Resolved

That the Panel agrees its outline programme of work.

86 Any other items

No other business had been notified to the Chair.

87 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 7th July 2025 at 10:30am at County Hall, Northallerton.

The meeting concluded at 12.13 pm.
DP.