

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Thursday, 13th January, 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 (Ryedale District Council), Mike Chambers (Harrogate Borough Council), Helen Grant (Richmondshire District Council), Tim Grogan (Selby District Council), Carl Maw (Scarborough Borough Council), Patrick Mulligan (Craven District Council) and Darryl Smalley (City of York Council).

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

In attendance: Mags Godderidge (observer to Panel), Lisa Winward (Chief Constable) (North Yorkshire Police), Jonathan Dyson (Area Manager) (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service), Matt Walker (Head of Professional Standards) (North Yorkshire Police), Lorraine Crossman-Smith (North Yorkshire Police) and Rhiannon Wright (Force Vetting Manager) (North Yorkshire Police).

Officers from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner: Zoe Metcalfe, Caroline Blackburn (Asst Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer), Michael Porter (Chief Financial Officer), Tom Thorp (Asst Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer), Simon Dennis (Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer) and Jenni Newberry (Head of Commissioning and Partnerships).

Officers present: Diane Parsons (Principal Scrutiny Officer), Suzanne Truman and Emily Brayshaw (NYCC Finance).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

563 Apologies

The Chair reminded all present of the decision-making arrangements for the meeting as set out on the agenda frontsheet. Following the expiry of the legislation permitting remote committee meetings in May 2021, the County Council resolved at its meeting on 5th May 2021 that in light of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic circumstances, remote live-broadcast committee meetings should continue, with any formal decision required being taken by the Chief Executive Officer under his emergency decision-making powers and after consultation with other officers and Members as appropriate and after taking into account any views of the relevant Committee Members. As the Panel is constituted as a committee of the council, those present were reminded that the meeting was as such being held informally and any formal decisions required would be taken by the Chief Executive Officer under the terms advised.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that no apologies had been received.

564 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 (observer to Panel) notified that she is the Chief Executive Officer of Survive.

565 Welcome to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

The Chair welcomed the Commissioner and invited all Panel Members to introduce themselves.

The Commissioner thanked Jennifer Newberry for her work as Acting Commissioner. She also thanked the senior teams at North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, along with colleagues of the EnableNY team, for their time and support since her election. The Commissioner acknowledged the importance of the relationship between the Panel and the Commissioner's office and that she would like to work collaboratively with the Panel. Thanks were given to DCC Phil Cain, who is shortly due to retire, and welcome was also given to DCC Mabs Hussain, who has just moved into this new role.

566 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 4th November 2021

Resolved – that the following be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration under his emergency delegated powers:-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

567 Tackling Drug Crime in North Yorkshire

Chief Inspector Lorraine Crossman-Smith presented an overview of North Yorkshire Police's ("NYP") work to tackle County Lines and drug crime more broadly. The overview provided included the numbers of active organised crime groups ("OCGs"), the work done to disrupt County Lines activity, the prevalence of 'cuckooing' in North Yorkshire and the success of some recent operations to dismantle drug gang operations.

Members asked about the linkages between the drug strategy and the strategy for tackling violence against women and girls. The latter strategy has not yet been published, although DCC Hussain emphasised the importance of NYP identifying vulnerabilities around OCGs and County Lines groups, and making sure that the appropriate referrals for vulnerable women and girls take place.

Members were also keen to understand the apparent increase in reported County Lines and linked phone numbers compared with figures given pre-pandemic. It was explained that NYP has become more effective in its response over the last few years and more resource has been dedicated to tackling drug crime. However, once one line is taken down another gets set up. NYP's understanding of trends and vulnerable individuals has improved as a result of having greater resource.

During the discussion with Panel Members, it was acknowledged that education and proactive working with schools is important for gaining intelligence on drugs activity. The Commissioner stressed that this issue cuts across various parts of the public sector and that she will be pushing for greater collaboration with health partners.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the report provided and continues to seek annual progress updates.

568 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th November 2021

Detective Superintendent Matt Walker and Rhiannon Wright of NYP presented an overview of the force's vetting of officers and staff, including the kinds of checks undertaken, how transferees are vetted and when a vetting review is triggered within NYP. Reference was also made to the supportive nature of the vetting function, to help ensure that certain individuals are less likely to be susceptible to corruption, and the steps taken to ensure there is no disproportionality around ethnicity in relation to vetting.

The Panel asked about 'open source' checks, which include reviewing information available in the public domain (e.g. Facebook/social media) and it was clarified that these checks are done for all police officers and staff. It was highlighted that others areas of the force, dealing with Integrity and Professional Standards, also have a role to play in ensuring appropriate protection, in addition to relying on the checks and reviews which come through vetting.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the report provided.

569 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel

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

570 Members' Questions

The Commissioner was asked to outline her approach to training and induction to the role; in particular which external stakeholders she has been able to engage with. The Commissioner responded by outlining her engagement with senior colleagues at NYP, the fire service and Enable North Yorkshire, in addition to access to a programme of induction and support made available through the national association for Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC).

The Panel welcomed the support expressed recently by the Commissioner to target hare coursing and the Commissioner was urged to similarly tackle raptor persecution. The Commissioner has discussed the issue with the National Park Authorities in North Yorkshire and is reaching out to organisations to look at how to tackle this.

The Commissioner was also asked how the public response is developing to the consultation regarding the precept-setting, particularly for fire and rescue. The consultation does not close until midnight (13th January), but the Commissioner felt there is already a sense that the public would support an increase in the precept for the fire service. The Commissioner also outlined how she has been trying to lobby for support within government to give North Yorkshire greater precept flexibility for fire and rescue, and she thanked the Panel for writing in response to the consultation on this basis.

571

Priorities for Policing and Fire and Rescue 2021/24

Considered –

The report of the Commissioner, outlining the strategic priorities for policing and fire, as part of the development of the Police and Crime and Fire and Rescue Plans 2021/24.

The Panel heard that the outline framework will guide development of both plans. The Commissioner feels it important to keep continuity of the CARE principles. Five strategic priorities for change were outlined. Each Plan will have its own service specification outcomes against the framework.

The Commissioner was asked for her views and plans around reinforcing the frontline of policing. The Commissioner would like to see more visible policing, although is happy that the third tranche of planned officer intake will go some way to supporting this. A Member highlighted that significant police resource is dedicated to responding to those in a mental health crisis but that many of the public do not feel that this is a policing priority and asked the Commissioner how the police will strike the right balance. The Commissioner acknowledged a need for greater collaboration with health partners and others as a broader community approach, in order to be able to release frontline resource. Reference was also made by Members to the benefits of having more warranted officers based in the community.

It is planned that the Panel will receive the draft plans in March 2022.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the report provided.

572

Setting the Precepts for 2022/23 for Policing and Fire and Rescue

Considered –

The report of the Commissioner, providing national and local context to the budget position for policing and fire and rescue, ahead of the Commissioner's precept proposals to Panel in February 2022.

Policing

Michael Porter provided an overview, which included the following points:

- Government has indicated a £10 precept flexibility for all areas, for the next three years. The public consultation appears overall to be supportive of an increase but further detail will be provided to Panel next month.
- The linked costs to the police officer uplift programme are considerable as the funding doesn't cover kit or equipment for example. Once these officers get to the top of the pay scale, the costs to the organisation will increase to almost £4.7m.
- Beyond the uplift programme, there will be investment in support services for victims of violent crime, especially violence against women and girls, and to tackle the causes of harm.
- The biggest area of budget risk going forward is in relation to pay awards.
- The capital grant provided is minimal (£116k last year) and government expect to give more to revenue and for police services to make capital contributions from this.

In relation to a Member's query, it was agreed that it would be identified what the failure rate is for officers on probation.

Members expressed concern at the potential for overspend as a result of non-pay inflation. Mr Porter acknowledged these concerns and advised that a more detailed analysis will be worked up in the next financial year, to help refine plans. He also highlighted future risks around contracts linked to RPI. In response to a query regarding pandemic-related costs, Mr Porter advised that budget reserves can be deployed if such costs cannot be contained.

Fire and Rescue

Michael Porter's overview for the Panel included the following points:

- The provisional settlement is very challenging, with North Yorkshire not included in those areas currently identified as benefiting from a £5 precept flexibility.
- A 1.99% increase would provide an annual increase of just under 3 pence per week. There appears to potentially be a lot of public support for larger increase, to enable investment back into the service.
- The financial challenges for the service are considerable, with the need to draw on reserves to ensure a balanced budget, and with pressures around staff pay, utility and estate costs, etc.
- The budget is not forecast to be balanced from 2024/25. Around £31m will be needed to invest in the service over the next few years but almost all of this will need to be borrowed.

Members expressed significant concern at the outlook for the service's budget position, particularly if inflation pushes up costs.

The Commissioner sought to reassure that she has been lobbying hard within government for greater precept flexibility. Jonathan Dyson (FRS) highlighted that the planned work around the Risk and Resource Model for the service will need to revolutionise the service's approach, including looking at different staffing models and vehicles, while ensuring that it can be risk-focussed and proportionate.

The Chair reminded Panel Members that an informal Finance Sub-Group meeting has been organised with Mr Porter for 3rd February, to help review the budget in further detail. Details will be circulated.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the report provided.

573

Work Programme

Considered –

The report from the Panel Secretariat, outlining a proposed programme of work for the Panel.

The 28th April meeting will be cancelled and will be replaced with a date during the week commencing 14th March 2022, to be advised. It was noted that work has recommenced on developing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Panel and OPFCC and that it was anticipated that this would come to Panel in the spring.

A reminder was provided that the Commissioner's public consultation on the Council Tax precept for policing and fire and rescue closes at midnight (13th January).

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the report provided.

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

The Chair referred to the published correspondence received from the office of the Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP, Minister for Crime, Policing and Probation, responding to the Panel's letter regarding Panel powers and the need for a power of recall for Commissioners. The Home Office will be publishing the outcomes of its review of Commissioners, to include issues such as recall, in due course. The Panel agreed to note the Minister's response.

The meeting concluded at 12.30 pm.

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