

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Monday, 7th February, 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, Mags Godderidge and Martin Walker.

Zoe Metcalfe (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner)

In attendance: Jason Dickson (North Yorkshire Police), Jonathan Dyson (Area Manager) (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service), Mabs Hussain (Deputy Chief Constable) (North Yorkshire Police) and 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), 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), Emily Brayshaw and Suzanne Truman (NYCC Finance).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

575 Welcome and 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.

576 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.

577 Consideration of Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chair highlighted that the Panel wishes to retain the right to consider moving into closed session at Item 11, but that he didn't think the Panel would be exercising that right today. However, this decision will be made after the reports at Item 10 have been presented.

578 Co-option of Third Independent Member to the Panel

Considered –

The report of the Panel Secretariat updating the Panel on the position regarding the application to co-opt a third independent member to the Panel.

Diane Parsons updated that the Home Office had given formal agreement to the co-option of a third member (Mags Godderidge) in January 2022. The Panel's Arrangements have been duly updated. The Panel must always have a minimum of two co-opted members but is now able to have three if it wishes. The Chair congratulated Mags on her formal appointment.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the update provided regarding its membership arrangements.

579 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 13th January 2022

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 13th January 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

580 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel

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

581 Members' Questions

A concern was raised with the Commissioner following a recent meeting of the Richmondshire branch of the Yorkshire Local Councils Association, that there appears to be a significant amount of drug use and distribution in the small towns and villages of Richmondshire. The Commissioner agreed to attend a meeting of the Richmondshire branch to advise what the police are doing to tackle this issue.

582 Force Control Room performance update on the 999 and 101 services.

Superintendent Jason Dickson presented the key points from the report and highlighted that a business case will be going to the Commissioner shortly to look to finance further planned improvements to the service.

Members expressed concerns that some 999 calls have taken over two minutes to answer and asked for further detail about the business case. Members were advised that this would look at introducing software to help more accurately predict demand and as such support the better targeting of resources into the Force Control Room (FCR). Supt Dickson acknowledged that further work is needed to understand if the recent increase in 999 calls is going to be a sustained trend and, if so, how it could best be addressed.

Members were reminded that Single Online Home has been introduced and this should help to shift demand away from the 101 service, although the Panel were also keen to highlight the difficulties of relying on this method where there is a growing ageing population.

Supt Dickson agreed that further data could be brought to a future meeting on when many of the calls to 101 are abandoned (e.g. weekends, evenings)

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) notes the performance update provided on the 101 and 999 services;
- (b) receives information in future reports to highlight when 101 calls are abandoned; and
- (c) seeks a further performance update at the beginning of 2023, to include a review of take-up of Single Online Home as a method of reporting.

583

Tackling Hate Crime in North Yorkshire

Considered –

The report of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner regarding hate crime reporting in North Yorkshire and York and how hate crime is being tackled.

Members were keen to understand what measures are put in place to decrease hate crime. A hate crime awareness course can be used as a possible catalyst for behaviour change in those who have perpetrated. A lot of partnership work is also undertaken in terms of prevention.

The Commissioner was asked what is being done proactively to tackle misogynistic behaviours in both the police and fire services, following the grossly misogynistic language and behaviour among some London police officers as reported through a recent IOPC investigation.

The Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable outlined various elements to this approach. There is a national Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and North Yorkshire has its own strategic priorities in line with this. Clear standards are set around calling out inappropriate behaviour so that issues can be tackled at source before potentially developing into something worse. If a matter of concern is flagged up through Professional Standards then it is tackled robustly and quickly. There is also a confidential reporting line for staff where they do not feel able to overtly challenge others. The Commissioner's Chief Executive also chairs a monthly Appropriate Authorities Liaison Meeting, to ensure that the OPFCC is able to scrutinise how the police are interrogating these issues.

Jonathan Dyson outlined the importance of the Code of Ethics for the fire service; that it is a values-driven organisation, which ensures that people have a voice at all

levels and feel able to challenge.

In response to queries regarding reporting centres in North Yorkshire, it was highlighted that NYCC libraries are reporting centres but that staff training has temporarily lapsed due to Covid-19. Members also asked about the Commissioner's proposal to set up an independent hate crime scrutiny panel and whether this could be for part of an existing group. The Panel was advised that further work will need to be done to establish whether a new panel needs to be set up, but it will not replicate the work of other groups and independent expert advice will need to be brought in.

Members reflected that early intervention and prevention through education is most effective and also that vulnerable people do not always want to attend a public sector building to report a crime, but may be more comfortable with a voluntary/community organisation.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the update report provided on hate crime.

584 Panel Scrutiny of the Precept Proposals

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the guidance provided by the Panel Secretariat in relation to the statutory decision-making process for the policing and fire precepts.

585 Policing Precept Proposal 2022/23

Considered –

The Commissioner's report outlining her proposal for the police element of the Council Tax precept for 2022/23.

The Commissioner's proposal was to set the precept at £281.06, representing an increase of £10 (or 3.69%) over the 2021/22 level for a Band D property. The Panel heard that the income levied would not only support the policing budget by meeting anticipated increases in costs (pay and non-pay inflation) but would also ensure the recruitment and training of new officers under the national uplift programme, in addition to investment around victims' services.

Members sought further reassurance as to the rationale for setting the precept at the maximum permissible and that the impact of this levy would be discernible to the wider public. The Commissioner and Chief Constable spoke to the police service's plans for deploying the additional police officers to improving public contact, enhancing place-based neighbourhood problem-solving, victim engagement and roads policing (including prevention). The Commissioner also sought to reassure that she will hold the Chief Constable to account for a clear return on the investments made and that performance targets would be set to ensure that the service becomes more efficient, especially across its capital programme. The Commissioner also emphasised the importance for the force in taking up the opportunity of the precept flexibility to deliver these priorities, particularly where such flexibility cannot be guaranteed or recovered in the future.

Members noted that over 40% of the public who responded to the Commissioner's consultation had supported an increase of £10 and that 65% had supported some

level of increase on last year's levy.

The Commissioner was also asked about the increasing costs for the OPFCC and Panel were advised that this is not expected to be a sustained trend but linked more to planning around factors such as pay awards and National Insurance increases. Simon Dennis will provide further information for the Panel in due course around arrangements to ensure resilience within the OPFCC.

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

That the Panel supports the Commissioner's proposal to increase the policing precept for 2022/23 to £281.06, thereby representing an increase of £10 (or 3.69%) over the 2021/22 level for a Band D property.

586

Fire and Rescue Service Precept Proposal 2022/23

Considered –

The Commissioner's report outlining her proposal for the fire and rescue element of the Council Tax precept for 2022/23.

The Commissioner presented a proposal to set the fire and rescue element of the Council Tax precept at £75.61 for 2022/23, which represents a 1.98% increase (or £1.47) over the 2021/22 level for a Band D property.

The Panel heard that government funding is failing to keep up with the organisation's costs and investment needs, and that both pay and non-pay inflationary costs are expected to present a significant challenge moving forward. The Commissioner is seeking the maximum permissible increase for the service, before a referendum would be triggered.

The Panel noted that reserves are being drawn on to balance the planned budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24 but that thereafter there is currently an unbalanced budget position. Members expressed their concerns at the precarious financial position that the service is currently forecasted to be in over the next few years and that planning assumptions around pay and non-pay costs are fairly tight for 2022/23.

The Panel noted the strong support from the public for a £5 precept increase (50%) and that 71% support some level of increase. Both the Commissioner and Panel Members expressed disappointment that in spite of the efforts of the Commissioner and other local partners, including the Panel Chair and Vice Chairs, the government has not afforded North Yorkshire's fire service the same £5 flexibility that has been awarded to some other fire and rescue authorities for 2022/23. The Panel offered its continued support for the Commissioner's efforts in seeking to influence future spending reviews in this respect.

Panel members were keen to understand how sustainable efficiencies can be delivered and welcomed the Commissioner's offer to engage with the Panel around the developing work on the Risk and Resource Model in a few months' time. It was also noted that work is underway to try to link up the police and fire IT systems and that once this is given Home Office approval this should afford greater efficiency too.

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

That the Panel supports the Commissioner's proposal to increase the fire and rescue

precept for 2022/23 to £75.61, thereby representing an increase of £1.47 (or 1.98%) for a Band D property.

587 Closed Session

The Panel did not retire into closed session as business under Item 10 was concluded in public session. However, the Chair wished to note that the Panel would like to retain the ability to retire into closed session on future occasions, should it be deemed necessary.

588 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 12.00 pm.

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