

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 13th October, 2022 at City of York Council West Offices, commencing at 10.30 am.

Councillors; Peter Wilkinson (Hambleton District Council (Vice Chair), in the Chair), Cllr Mike Chambers (Harrogate Borough Council), Helen Grant (Richmondshire District Council), Eric Jaquin (Craven District Council) and Darryl Smalley (City of York Council).

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

In attendance: Jonathan Dyson (Chief Fire Officer) (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service) and Supt Ian Scott (North Yorkshire Police).

Officers from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner: Zoë Metcalfe (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire), Caroline Blackburn (Asst Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer), Michael Porter (Chief Financial Officer), Simon Dennis (Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer) and Sarah Arnott (Commissioning and Partnerships Manager).

Officers present: Diane Parsons (Principal Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Carl Les (North Yorkshire County Council) (Chair), Keith Aspden (City of York Council) (Vice-Chair), Lindsay Burr MBE (Ryedale District Council), Tim Grogan (Selby District Council) and Carl Maw (Scarborough Borough Council).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

623 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting; in particular the Panel's new Member, Councillor Eric Jaquin. The Commissioner introduced colleagues attending with her, including Superintendent Ian Scott from North Yorkshire Police. Apologies were noted.

624 Declarations of Interest

Martin Walker noted that he is a Trustee of IDAS; a domestic abuse charity which is a recipient of funding from the Commissioner's office ("the OPFCC"). Mags Godderidge notified that she is CEO of Survive; a charity which is similarly commissioned by the OPFCC to provide services to survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

625 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 21st July 2022

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2022, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

626 Progress on Issues Raised by the Panel

Considered –

The report from the Panel Secretariat outlining progress against issues raised by the Panel at or following a previous Panel meeting.

In relation to the outstanding action at point 1 (anti-social behaviour in Norton), the Commissioner advised that a locality meeting has been arranged for 26th October. *Point 1 will henceforth be marked as 'actioned'.*

In relation to the actioned issue at point 2 (disorder at Richmond Falls during the extremely hot weather), the Commissioner and other partners have met with Richmond Town Council with further collaboration agreed among key partners going forward to support on this issue locally.

It was noted that point 4 (draft Policing and Crime Annual Report 2021/22) remains outstanding in relation to provision of data to the Panel on the percentage of violent crimes linked to violence against women and girls. The Commissioner agreed to provide this to the Panel before the next meeting.

Point 7, regarding information about the Fire and Rescue Service Direct Entry scheme, will be provided to Panel at a future juncture.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Panel notes the report provided; and
- (b) That the Commissioner provides an update on the crime data as highlighted at point 4 of the report, prior to the next Panel meeting.

627 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel

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

628 Members' Questions

Concerns were raised by the Panel in relation to custody suite arrangements for individuals detained in the Northallerton area. It was highlighted that a previous Commissioner had committed to providing a report on the efficacy of custody arrangements whereby detainees from Northallerton were being placed in custody in Darlington. Concern was raised with Commissioner Metcalfe that detainees were being escorted by a couple of officers from Northallerton to Harrogate, resulting on occasions in a four-hour round trip, and thereby depleting local policing resource.

In response, the Commissioner highlighted the rigour behind the original case for reviewing custody arrangements in Northallerton, the fact that the demand profile in Northallerton doesn't support the need for a custody suite and the high costs for building a custody suite. The Commissioner also highlighted that HMICFRS has recently inspected the service on its custody arrangements, with no concerns raised around transporting of detainees to custody. The Commissioner committed to continuing to monitor the impact of this decision with the Chief Constable and offered to bring a further paper to the Panel if needed. The Panel were also advised that offenders are only brought to custody where necessary and proportionate. Further to additional Panel concerns raised regarding the impact of travel times on

younger/more vulnerable detainees, Supt Scott emphasised that there is provision for voluntary attendance and the police will aim to plan and support around arrangements. It was also emphasised that no officer would be 'put off' the necessity of arrest due to travel times to custody.

Panel Members subsequently discussed with the Commissioner the arrangements for attending burglaries; namely whether North Yorkshire Police are committed to sending out an officer to each incident and if so how this can be sustainably resourced. It was clarified that the police will attend all dwelling burglaries but this does not include outbuildings, although a structure such as an integrated garage would be considered part of the dwelling. Panel Members expressed concern that burglaries of non-domestic dwellings can be serious and destroy livelihoods.

It was noted that the fire and rescue service had recently participated in a York Armed Forces Community Covenant event. The Commissioner confirmed that both the police and fire services are signed up to the Covenant and are very supportive of it.

In response to a query regarding the anticipated publication of the report of the recent HMICFRS PEEL inspection of North Yorkshire Police and of the HMI inspection of the fire and rescue service, the Commissioner believed it would now be early next year for both. It was also clarified that police officer numbers are heading towards 1600 by the end of the financial year, with a target to get to 1645.

629

Risk and Resource Model for NY Fire and Rescue Service

Considered –

The Commissioner's report regarding the finalised Risk and Resource Model.

The Commissioner outlined the process undertaken in developing the model including the formal consultation. Support for the proposals for Harrogate and Scarborough had been finely balanced but overall supportive. There had been slightly less support for the Huntington station proposals.

Panel Members challenged the Commissioner on the decision reached on Huntington, in view of the objections raised through City of York Council, through the Panel and through many local residents, in addition to concerns following two large fires in that area in recent months. The Commissioner highlighted that there was marginal – not overwhelming - dissent around the York proposals and that a lot of consultation was conducted with the public and firefighters in that area. This had been a strategic decision based on evidence and data for the last five years. The Commissioner advised that she understood the concerns expressed and that the focus would be on making that area a centre of excellence for protection and prevention. In response to queries regarding budgetary constraints and whether these underpinned the decision for York, the Commissioner stressed that she would still go ahead with these changes even with a larger budget as this was felt to be the appropriate approach strategically.

The Panel also expressed that the commitment by the Commissioner to seek ongoing reassurance on response times seemed imprecise and that they would welcome detail on how frequently this will be done. The Commissioner confirmed that she reviews performance data at each Public Accountability Meeting (PAM). There is a national benchmark for response times and the averages come through the PAM.

Members also highlighted the relatively lower numbers of respondents to the

consultation aged under 44 and whether this had skewed perspectives. The Commissioner felt that based on empirical performance, the numbers who engaged was solid, although acknowledged there are always ways to improve.

It was agreed that the Panel will schedule a further report on to its work programme to gain assurance around the impact of the changes put in place.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the report provided; and
- (b) Receives a further report from the Commissioner in the next financial year to review the impact of the risk and resource model on response times.

630

Making All Women and Girls Safer and Improving Victims' Services

Considered –

The report of the Commissioner updating on progress against the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy and on the development of the new Victims' Centre.

The Commissioner outlined some of the progress underway against the key objectives of the strategy's Delivery Plan – as detailed in the report provided - and highlighted that a detailed action tracker underpins the objectives. Progress will be monitored by the VAWG Strategic Governance Board.

The Commissioner has also purchased a commercial property on the outskirts of York with the intention of developing a new Victims' Centre to house North Yorkshire's Sexual Assault Referral Centre and Child Sexual Assault Assessment Services alongside a Video-Recorded Interview suite for victims.

Members asked how the Commissioner has ensured that third sector bodies have sufficient capacity and funding to be able to meet the likely increase in demand for services flowing from the work in the Delivery Plan. The Commissioner acknowledged these concerns and that she will give consideration to this, along with offering to meet with any third sector agencies seeking a further conversation.

In relation to strategic objective 1 of the Delivery Plan regarding listening to women and girls from under-represented communities, the Commissioner was asked what steps are being taken to ensure third sector organisations that are supporting victims and survivors have access to funded interpretation services, as well as affordable and accessible office space in York. In response, it was highlighted that work is underway to establish a sub-group of the Board consisting of support services who work with victims and survivors, to ensure valuable feedback is obtained from the third sector. It was acknowledged that access to interpretation services is a significant factor in this objective and the Commissioner's office is currently reviewing options in relation to funding and provision to support all victims of crime.

Reference was made by the Panel to the low number of detectives nationally and locally and the fact that this year has seen the highest number of sexual offences reported. The Commissioner was asked how confident she is that there are sufficient trained detectives to deal with this increase in reporting. In response, Supt Scott spoke to a resilience action plan, which is focussing on bringing in more detectives and upskilling those currently in the service.

The Commissioner was also asked about the separate references in the report to the police explaining and offering special measures and also victims and survivors feeling under pressure to withdraw complaints where it's felt there is unlikely to be a successful conviction. The concern centred around management of expectations for victims and survivors as it was understood that it is the court that decides on special measures, not the police, and that similarly the decision to prosecute rests with the CPS. The Commissioner agreed to obtain further clarity on these points.

Members conveyed the importance of the strategy focussing on early education of both boys and girls around consent. They also considered further detail on the additional complementary services that the new Victims' Centre intends to offer, such as a quiet room facility.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the report provided;
- (b) Receives further detail prior to the next Panel meeting to clarify on the police role in explaining and offering special measures to victims and survivors; and
- (c) Receives a further annual update on progress against the Delivery Plan in 2023.

631 Tackling wildlife crime in North Yorkshire

Considered –

The Commissioner's report on tackling wildlife crime in North Yorkshire.

Panel members conveyed that they felt the report provided did not adequately address the concerns previously raised by the Panel in relation to wildlife crime; in particular on raptor persecution and what is being done to tackle this. It was highlighted by Members that North Yorkshire has the worst profile in the country for wildlife crime including the killing of raptors, taking of birds' eggs, badger baiting and hare coursing. There are also very few prosecutions.

The Panel also queried when the Wildlife and Rural Crime Strategy will be finalised and asked to see a copy of this. The Commissioner agreed to prepare a more detailed report on wildlife crime to bring back to the Panel at a future juncture.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Receives a further report from the Commissioner giving more detail on the position regarding wildlife crime in North Yorkshire and what is being done to tackle it;
- (b) Receives a steer on when the finalised Wildlife and Rural Crime Strategy will be completed.

632 OPFCC Organisational Development

Considered –

The report of the Commissioner's Chief Executive summarising progress to date and

planned work in respect of development of the OPFCC as an organisation.

Key points of introduction from the Commissioner included that the OPFCC staff intend to work in shared spaces in future with North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and that the Commissioner is keen to raise the profile of the office's services. Jennifer Newberry will assume the role of Assistant Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. The Commissioner also thanked the Panel and its support for the work done with her team.

Simon Dennis referred to the need to comprehensively review the OPFCC as an organisation and advise on any skills and resource gaps as needed and the report outlines the outcomes of this work. There is also a responsibility to ensure the team is prepared for arrangements for a Mayoral Combined Authority. The current Interim Assistant Chief Executive provision is being stood down and Simon Dennis thanked Caroline Blackburn and Thomas Thorp for their work in these roles. Two new Director posts have been created and the recruitment process is underway.

Members acknowledged the turbulent period that the office had recently been through and staff were praised for their continuing service in this period. Members asked about the division of roles between the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner. The Commissioner's rationale is to enhance resilience. Jennifer Newberry previously stood in as Acting Commissioner and is very experienced in commissioning and partnerships. It is intended that she will continue in this role and also as Victims Champion. This is a non-statutory arrangement to see through to the end of the Commissioner's term.

In response to a query about the cost impact of the Director appointments, it was clarified that provision was made in the financial planning round earlier this year for these posts.

Members requested further clarity on roles and responsibilities in the office. It was agreed that the new structure chart will be sent on to the Panel. The Panel also requested a copy of the office's Delivery Plan.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the report provided on organisational development in the OPFCC;
- (b) Receives an updated structure chart for the OPFCC; and
- (c) Receives a copy of the finalised Delivery Plan for the OPFCC.

633

Complaints handling by the Panel

Considered –

The report by the Panel Secretariat providing an overview of complaints received in the last year.

Diane Parsons reported that aside from the exceptional period in October 2021 whereby a significant volume of complaints were received by the Panel regarding the previous Commissioner, complaint volumes since have been very low. In the main, complaints received have been in respect of North Yorkshire Police and as such have been appropriately diverted. However, these were not considered to be significant enough in volume to warrant any recommendations to the Panel to adjust or enhance its complaints materials or signposting.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the annual complaints report provided.

634 Recent engagement activity by the Panel: conferences and networks update

Considered –

The report of the Panel Secretariat updating Panel on recent engagement and partnerships activity involving the North Yorkshire Panel.

Diane Parsons outlined two key events held recently; the LGA annual workshop for Panels and a meeting of the Regional Yorkshire and Humber Panel network. Cllrs Wilkinson and Aspden, along with Diane Parsons, were invited to speak at the LGA event in relation to complaints handling. The event raised some issues of interest via the Home Office including the potential for a model of regional Panel support to be explored further by them.

The regional network meeting had been well attended by Members and officers of all four Panels. Conversations centred around the LGA event of the previous day. Cllr Wilkinson explained that the discussions highlighted that North Yorkshire's Panel has developed some areas of good practice, such as in budget scrutiny. Other Panels are interested to hear of the North Yorkshire experience of taking on scrutiny of fire and rescue services.

Members were asked to note that the next regional network meeting will be held on 9th March 2023 in Leeds.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the update report provided on recent engagement and partnership activity.

635 Work Programme

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the outline work programme provided.

636 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 12.10 pm.
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