

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 12th January, 2023, in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Northallerton commencing at 10.30 am.

Councillors Carl Les (North Yorkshire County Council) in the Chair; Keith Aspden (City of York Council), Mike Chambers (Harrogate Borough Council), Tim Grogan (Selby District Council) and Eric Jaquin (Craven District Council).

Community Co-opted Members: Fraser Forsyth and Mags Godderidge

In attendance: Jonathan Dyson (Chief Fire Officer) (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service) and Lisa Winward (Chief Constable) (North Yorkshire Police).

Officers from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner: Michael Porter (Chief Financial Officer), Simon Dennis (Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer), Tamara Pattinson (Director, Delivery and Assurance) Sarah Arnott (Commissioning and Partnerships Manager) and Sarah Davies (Executive Assistant).

Officers present: Diane Parsons (Principal Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Peter Wilkinson (Hambleton District Council) (Vice-Chair), Helen Grant (Richmondshire District Council), Carl Maw (Scarborough Borough Council), Darryl Smalley (City of York Council); Martin Walker (Community Co-opted member).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

637 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. The Chair acknowledged the Commissioner's unavoidable absence from the meeting and thanked those present from her office, the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer for attending to assist with the Panel's questions.

638 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.

Mags Godderidge notified that she is CEO of Survive; a charity which is commissioned by the OPFCC to provide services to survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

639 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 13th October 2022

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2022, having been printed and

circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

640 Progress on Issues Raised by the Panel

Considered –

The Panel Secretariat report outlining progress made against queries raised by the Panel at previous meetings.

Item 1 – Statistics on violence against women and girls (VAWG) in York. Simon Dennis reported that in 2021/22 in York there were 5,615 violent crimes of which 52% were linked to a female victim and 34% had a domestic abuse marker. In the wider North Yorkshire context, 53% of violent crimes were against women and 34% had a domestic abuse marker. The Chief Constable outlined the difficulties in understanding the full extent of the problem across the area.

Item 2 – Police role in explaining special measures to victims and survivors. The Chief Constable (CC) clarified that special measures are options that the courts have for making arrangements to adapt a process in order to facilitate giving best evidence by victims and vulnerable people. The CC highlighted the video recording of evidence and NYP want to make sure all victims can access these services where needed.

Item 3 – OPFCC structure chart. Simon Dennis advised that this is undergoing further tweaks as staffing changes are made and posts are filled. Further updates to the chart will be made available in future.

Item 4 – OPFCC Delivery Plan. A mature draft of the Plan is with the Commissioner for consideration and it is hoped that this will be brought to the Panel either on 6th February or to the March meeting.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the progress updates provided; and
- (b) Receives a copy of the OPFCC Delivery Plan at either the February or March 2023 Panel meetings.

641 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel

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

642 Members' Questions

A question was posed regarding the increase in financial crime and whether NYP feel they have adequate resources to deal with this effectively. The CC advised that millions of people are victims of some sort of scamming or fraud, including receiving fraudulent emails, every day so this could not be investigated in its entirety and also these crimes are not reported at scale to the police. NYP links in closely with Action Fraud and also has dedicated economic and cyber crime teams in the Regional Organised Crime Unit. Action Fraud collates information regarding financial crime and works with the most relevant force geographically to deal with one organised crime group, to avoid resources being directed from multiple forces.

Setting the precepts for 2023/24 for Policing and Fire and Rescue

Considered –

The report from the Commissioner's Chief Financial Officer setting out the budget position, planning assumptions and possible precept scenarios for both the police and fire services, ahead of bringing formal precept proposals to the Panel in February.

The Commissioner's public consultation on the precepts closes on 16th January. Responses will be reported back to the next Panel meeting.

Key issues highlighted by Michael Porter on the policing budget included:

- The Commissioner has been given the flexibility to raise the precept by up to £15. With a 1.8% increase in government funding and an increase of £15 in the precept, the policing budget is expected to still fall about £7m short next year.
- Pay awards were higher than expected. An assumption has been made that awards next year will be around 4%. In addition to pay-related cost pressures, there are significant increases expected in non-pay inflationary costs across all areas, e.g. estates/utilities, fuel, maintenance and repair. This is estimated to result in £8.8m of additional costs.
- Other changes will incur costs such as the planned investment to the Force Control Room (FCR) and meeting the target of having 1645 police officers by the end of this financial year.
- Regardless of whether the Commissioner decides to seek a £10 or £15 precept increase for policing, the service will still be left with a deficit. Further proposals will be brought to Panel next month.

A number of queries and issues were put back to Mr Porter regarding the policing budget and precept, including the following:

- An element of VAWG funding is included in the core budget and an update on this is awaited from the Ministry of Justice, to be updated on in February.
- Members noted the absence of information on capital spend. This will be updated on next time and consideration is being given as to whether more money can be put into capital to help deal with the challenging revenue position.
- Members asked whether 3.1% level of reserves was adequate. An element will be set aside next year for pay and inflationary pressures and money is set aside for any major incidents. Use of reserves is not favoured.
- Panel Members welcomed the investment into the FCR but asked whether it would be feasible to recruit and retain 44 staff where there is a tight market in York for customer service/control centre-type roles. The CC was confident in the recruitment exercise underway but acknowledged that retention is a challenge in the current market.

Mr Porter highlighted the following in relation to the fire and rescue service budget:

- The Commissioner is able to seek up to a £5 increase on the precept this year.
- A 5% pay award has been budgeted for.
- As per the policing service, fire is seeing steep increases in utilities costs, cleaning costs, etc.

- The service continues to drive through efficiencies and savings; around £450k of these are factored into the plans. There should be a balanced budget across the next four years.

In response, Members raised a number of points including the following:

- Members welcomed the flexibility offered to the Commissioner for this year's precept.
- Members highlighted that there is little detail around the £450k efficiencies identified and queried any impact to residents. Mr Porter highlighted that these are unlikely to impact frontline services; they all pertain to savings where budget holders have been able to look to reduce budgets.
- Mr Porter was asked about the fact that the Risk and Resource Model work has not been included in projections. Further information will be forthcoming on this next month.

The Panel were also keen to ask whether communities will see a visible difference to both services if the Commissioner seeks the highest precept increase available. It was agreed that this will be put back to the Commissioner for the next meeting.

Resolved –

That the Panel

- (a) Notes the report provided;
- (b) Receives further detail as requested within the precept proposal documentation to be put forward on 6th February.

644

Enhancing diversity and inclusivity in North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Considered –

The Commissioner's report on enhancing diversity and inclusivity in North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Simon Dennis and Sarah Arnott introduced the report, highlighting the formation of a distinct function within the Commissioner's office to focus on public confidence and inclusivity. The outline included mention of the review of the current independent scrutiny panel arrangements, to identify what can be done to support a more diverse membership. Public confidence surveys have been launched for both services. Staff knowledge and awareness is being enhanced through development programmes and skills packages.

The CC and Chief Fire Officer outlined steps being taken within their services. For NYP, for example, positive action teams are reaching out to communities. There is monitoring and support for diverse members of the workforce and inappropriate behaviour is picked up quickly. For North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services (NYFRS), confidential conversations will be held with staff from under-represented groups, to pick up on the lived experience of staff and draw on this to shape how the service gives a greater voice to staff and better understands communities.

Members asked about the challenge of retaining new recruits at NYP. The CC noted that the positive action team works closely with the recruitment team and that the attrition rate has reduced with the introduction of a more academic pathway of entry into the force.

Members also referred to the NYFRS response to the London Fire Brigade report and asked what mechanisms are in place for people to report conduct issues locally. The Chief Fire Officer referred to the necessity to cut down policies to make them easy to grasp and that a lot of work is needed to ensure staff understand the impact of their conduct and language. Speaking to those from protected characteristic groupings will assist.

The Panel highlighted that it would be helpful in due course to have some statistics on recruitment for under-represented groups across both services, particularly if comparisons can be made regionally. It was identified that it would also be helpful to have more information on the NYFRS actions and improvements identified following the London Fire Brigade report.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the report provided;
- (b) Takes a further update on equality and diversity within both services in due course;
- (c) Receives statistics in due course on recruitment of under-represented groups across both services; and
- (d) Receives further information, when available, of any actions and improvements identified by NYFRS following the London Fire Brigade report.

645

Tackling Wildlife Crime (deferred from 13 Oct 2022)

Considered –

The Commissioner's report regarding tackling wildlife crime.

Simon Dennis highlighted that the Commissioner is keen to meet with any Panel members to pick up specific points on this matter. It was highlighted that Councillor Wilkinson had indicated his interest in this but that the Panel as a whole will also likely want to keep this issue under review.

Tamara Pattinson highlighted key areas from the report, including difficulties in getting an accurate picture from crime reporting data and that NYP now use anti-social behaviour legislation against perpetrators as this helps ensure that more robust sanctions can be imposed where behaviour escalates.

A number of queries were raised about the detail of the report by the Panel as follows:

- What is the difference between an arrest and a disposal? *The CC responded that an arrest is the physical taking of liberty and a disposal is the outcome of the criminal investigation, which could be notice to attend court or a caution for example; or it could result in no further action.*
- A supplementary question to this was of the 33 disposals, how many actually went to court and were convicted? *The CC agreed to check on this and respond.*
- What are the warning letters and criminal behaviour warnings referred to on page 60 of the report?
- The individual who has recently been issued with a Criminal Behaviour Order, Mr Spence – is he a resident of North Yorkshire or elsewhere? *The*

CC agreed to check on this and respond.

- Is a Chief Inspector part of the Rural Task Force?
- How many prosecutions have there been for wildlife crime?
- The totals given in some of the tables at Annex A don't appear to correspond to the data listed?

The CC underlined that she would welcome any Panel members coming out to meet with the Rural Task Force. Simon Dennis offered to provide an addendum to the report to help address some of the outstanding queries raised.

The Panel noted the positive affirmations in the report from some local councillors in Craven area around the Protect Your Home scheme but felt it important that there is evidence that wildlife and rural crime are improving across the area. The Panel requested that this issue is therefore kept under review.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the report provided on wildlife crime;
- (b) Receives an addendum from the Commissioner's office, prior to the next meeting, in response to some of the detailed queries raised at the meeting;
- (c) Returns to reviewing efforts to tackle wildlife crime in due course.

646 Update on the North Yorkshire Police Complaints and Recognition Service

Considered –

The Commissioner's update report on the North Yorkshire Complaints and Recognition Service.

Simon Dennis reminded Panel of the 'Model 3' approach implemented by the Commissioner from March 2020, which has involved introducing a function 'in-house' to triage and handle certain complaints, and to seek independent review where requested by complainants. Reference was made to levels of service recovery achieved, as highlighted in the report, and that where there is significant learning required for an individual officer as part of a complaint, this process remains with the CC and Professional Standards. More recently, work has been undertaken to take care of complaints and expressions of appreciation regarding NYFRS. Mr Dennis highlighted the intention to do more regarding organisational learning and to release more capacity in the model so that the office can work more with both services to ensure improvements.

The Panel thanked Mr Dennis for the report and will revisit progress in this area in due course.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the report.

647 Work Programme

Considered –

The report of the Panel Secretariat outlining the Panel's forward work programme.

As per previous discussions at the meeting, it was agreed that wildlife crime will be added to the forward programme.

It was also agreed that cyber crime (economic crime) will be added. Simon Dennis referred to the work undertaken by the Commissioner with the North East Business Resilience Centre which works with SMEs and offered to provide further information to showcase the accomplishments of this model when the Panel takes the cyber crime report.

Resolved –

That the Panel agrees the programme of work and inclusion of further items as noted.

648 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 has been notified to the Chair.

The meeting concluded at 12.05 pm.
DP.