

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Northallerton, on Monday, 6th February, 2023, 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), Cllr Mike Chambers (Harrogate Borough Council), Tim Grogan (Selby 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), Lisa Winward (Chief Constable) (North Yorkshire Police), Ben Illsley (North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service) and Jane Larkin (Force Control Room Manager) (North Yorkshire Police).

Officers from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner: Zoë Metcalfe (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire), Michael Porter (Chief Financial Officer), Simon Dennis (Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer), Tamara Pattinson (Director, Delivery and Assurance), Sarah Arnott (Interim Director), Amanda Wilkinson (Director of Public Confidence) and Sarah Davies (Leadership Support to the Executive Team).

Officers present: Diane Parsons (Principal Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Helen Grant (Richmondshire District Council) and Carl Maw (Scarborough Borough Council).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

649 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

650 Declarations of Interest

Martin Walker notified that he is a Trustee of IDAS, which receives funding for its work from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC).

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.

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.

651 Consideration of Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chair wished to note that the Panel retains the privilege to consider whether it is necessary (and appropriate) to retire into closed session at item 12, in respect of its

consideration of the Commissioner's precept proposals.

652 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 12th January 2023

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2023, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

653 Progress on Issues Raised by the Panel

Diane Parsons updated the Panel on the status of the actions listed in the report. Since publication of the report, the OPFCC have provided some information in relation to Item 4 (statistics on recruitment of under-represented groups). The actions list will be updated ahead of the next Panel meeting.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the update report provided against outstanding actions.

654 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel

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

655 Members' Questions

The Commissioner was asked to provide the Panel with numbers of cases in North Yorkshire where prosecutions of rape have collapsed and what actions are being taken to improve this situation. This came on the back of recent national reporting which had identified that 70.4% of cases in North Yorkshire had collapsed, in comparison with 62% of cases nationally and less than 50% in West Yorkshire. The Commissioner agreed to provide a written response.

656 HMICFRS inspection report of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service 2021/22

Considered –

The recent inspection report of HMICFRS regarding North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS) and the Commissioner's response to these outcomes.

Members expressed concern at the downward trend of the service in comparison with the previous inspection report outcomes in 2018/19. In particular, concern was raised that standards have deteriorated since the transfer of governance; particularly around estates and cultural implications, which were seen as 'known issues' prior to the change taking effect.

The Commissioner acknowledged the concerns raised offered to brief Panel on the Delivery Plan and timescales for planned improvements. The Commissioner highlighted her confidence in the improvements made to NYFRS since last year's inspection and that robust plans are in place to tackle the major issues identified as of concern by HMICFRS.

The Chief Fire Officer gave further context around the inspection regime and highlighted the view that this has become more rigorous in the last couple of years. Significant progress has been made since the inspection but the service will continue to ensure progress is made.

Members queried whether workforce planning in the service is sufficiently robust and whether the service will be drawing on external help to make improvements. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the inspection held the service to account for the 2016 model of risk and resource planning, now superseded by the Risk and Resource Model, and that the report also doesn't factor in the extent of the county in its service response times. He therefore felt confident that the service would lift from its current grading. Mr Dyson also emphasised the strategy for change in place in the service around ensuring core values are embedded around diversity and inclusion. He acknowledged that there are pockets of the organisation which need to change in this respect but also felt that the language used by the inspectorate is very emotive. The Commissioner reinforced that her office has been re-shaped around investing in public confidence and inclusivity in both the police and fire services.

The Panel referred to the need for sustainable financial planning and it was queried as to whether the current governance model is adequately achieving this. It was also highlighted that the Commissioner will need to continue to lobby for precept flexibility next year. Members queried whether key changes and values are well understood by all staff. Both Mr Dyson and the Commissioner acknowledged that significant change brings uncertainty for all staff but that clear expectations are now being set and staff welfare is being supported.

The Commissioner was additionally asked about the report's references to challenges with availability of On-Call staff and how the Risk and Resource Model (RRM) impacts on this. It was explained that the RRM will enable additional investment into On-Call provision.

The Panel advised that this matter will be kept on the forward work programme and that an update on the improvement plan will be taken at a future meeting.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) notes the inspection report and the responses of the Commissioner and Chief Fire Officer; and
- (b) receives a future update on actions to improve the service in light of the outcomes of the inspection report.

657 Update on Force Control Room performance (999/101 services) and take-up of Single Online Home

Considered –

The report of the Commissioner updating on the performance of the Force Control Room (FCR) and take-up of Single Online Home.

The Commissioner acknowledged that response times for the 101 and 999 services have been unacceptable and outlined measures put in place to help tackle this, including her staff attending 'Gold' and 'Silver' level police meetings. An investment of £1.9m per year is also planned for the FCR. Improvements to handling are being modelled around the Right Care Right Person initiative as adopted by the force in

Humberside.

The Panel asked for percentages of the total calls abandoned to be provided within the next performance report.

The Chief Constable was asked to clarify the THRIVE process for identifying how a call should be handled and how calls about highways issues are dealt with, especially 'out of hours'. In terms of the latter, issues are referred to Highways directly.

The Panel considered the issue that a significant number of calls received by the FCR are not for the police to deal with, for example mental health and welfare calls. The Chief Constable acknowledged that there is often a cyclical requirement on the FCR where someone should have been supported by another agency such as mental health services and that a piece of productivity work is underway nationally to examine this further. The Commissioner highlighted the increase in funding for mental health triage in the FCR. She has also raised concerns with the Policing Minister on this matter and will be speaking to the Integrated Care Board soon to look at how the agencies can come together to tackle these difficulties.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) notes the report; and
- (b) receives a further update in due course on FCR performance and the impact of the Commissioner's investment.

658

Draft OPFCC Delivery Plan

Considered –

The report of the Commissioner's Chief Executive providing a draft Delivery Plan for the OPFCC, for review and comment by the Panel.

Simon Dennis explained that behind the organisational activity plan shared, there lies a delivery plan to detail and drive forward work towards reaching the outcomes of the key policing/fire and rescue plans. The report also set out a summary of the transition planning in anticipation of the move towards devolution.

Members welcomed the report. It was suggested that it would be helpful to incorporate something which assists in monitoring how the Commissioner's office is ensuring that major crime is being investigated and convictions pursued. Mr Dennis amplified the role of the Commissioner in encouraging and challenging local criminal justice service partners in securing necessary convictions. An assurance framework will also be published which will set out those areas where the office will seek the most detailed assurance on police and fire services but also of other agencies in pursuit of outcomes around prosecution.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) notes and welcomes the report; and
- (b) offers further suggestions for development where identified going forward.

The Panel agreed to adjourn the meeting after Item 10 for a short comfort break

(11:33am).

659 Panel Scrutiny of the Precept Proposals

The Panel resumed at 11:48am.

Resolved –

That the Panel notes the guidance note provided on its role in scrutinising the precept proposals.

660 Police Precept Proposal 2023/24

Considered –

The Commissioner's report outlining her proposal to set the Council Tax precept for policing for 2023/24 at £295.08 for a Band D property.

The Panel heard from the Commissioner that given the reviewed MTFP, continued inflationary pressures and potential pay awards, the budget gap for policing will continue to be a challenge over the next year and beyond. As such, the Commissioner is supportive of the Chief Constable conducting an organisational and operational review to restructure the organisation and improve delivery of frontline services. In proposing a precept increase of 4.99% for 2023/24, the Commissioner highlighted that a recent audit of services and processes identified a number of areas in need of investment within the service, particularly where the service needs to evolve to keep up with the changing nature of crime. The precept investment will underpin these improvements and will include the digital forensic unit, expanding the numbers of detectives, ensuring a uniformed response presence in communities and the planned investment into the Force Control Room to help improve the 101 and 999 services.

The Commissioner outlined her rationale in not seeking to request the maximum amount available (£15 increase on a Band D property). While she would like to ensure the Chief Constable has sufficient funding to pursue the above improvements, she would also like the police service to improve its handle on finances. The Commissioner is also acutely aware of the cost of living pressures many families are experiencing.

The Panel were concerned to emphasise that communities will need to be reassured of visible improvements in policing if they are being asked to pay more in 2023/24; particularly as the report outlined a pause in recruitment on PCSOs and holding vacancies within the force. The Panel were advised that the recent PCSO recruitment exercise had fallen well short of the standard and numbers required. Many of those who would have been interested previously in this campaign had instead chosen to apply for the police officer uplift programme and also the current market has made other career options more favourable. The Chief Constable highlighted that North Yorkshire also has a much higher proportional number of PCSOs than most other forces so the organisational review presents an opportunity to examine this further and re-shape the neighbourhood policing service, rather than holding budget on the assumption of PCSO recruitment.

The Panel sought further reassurance that as the organisational review will be examining the balance of police officers and staff, that communities are involved in these conversations. The Commissioner assured the Panel that visible neighbourhood policing remains a key commitment and that she will ensure that the

service are held to account for delivery of this.

The Panel would like to receive a further update on the service's workforce planning and developments in neighbourhood policing at an appropriate juncture.

Panel Members voted unanimously in support of the Commissioner's precept proposal for policing.

Resolved –

That the Panel:

- (a) supports the Commissioner's proposal to increase the policing precept for 2023/24 to £295.08, thereby representing an increase of £14.03 (or 4.99%) over the 2022/23 level for a Band D property; and
- (b) receives a further update in due course on the organisational review of North Yorkshire Police and developments to improve visible neighbourhood policing.

661

Fire and Rescue Service Precept Proposal 2023/24

Considered –

The Commissioner's report outlining her proposal to set the fire and rescue element of the Council Tax precept for 2023/24 at £80.61 (Band D).

The Panel welcomed the flexibility afforded this year to NYFRS to be able to seek up to a £5 increase on a Band D property and the Commissioner thanked the Panel for its support in seeking fairer funding last year. The Panel noted the significant support from the public consultation for the service to receive a sum greater than a £5 increase and it was queried whether a higher amount could be sought. The Commissioner outlined that the costs of imposing a referendum would outweigh the potential benefits to be gained. The Panel conveyed that it will be key for the Commissioner to continue to lobby for fair funding for the service, particularly as this flexibility is unlikely to be given next year and the budget position is uncertain due to pay and non-pay inflationary pressures.

It was noted by the Panel that urgent investment and renewal is required for parts of the fire estate and fleet and that the service is therefore in a challenging position going forward, with various budget/inflationary uncertainties.

The Panel sought reassurances around the intentions of the Risk and Resource Model; particularly that prevention and protection work, along with the planned investments in On-Call, will still be implemented in view of the budget uncertainties. The Panel were advised that the Commissioner does not expect to have to remove any elements of the Model agreed and that investments in the plan will still be funded.

The Panel voted unanimously in favour of supporting the Commissioner's precept proposal.

Resolved –

That the Panel supports the Commissioner's proposal to increase the fire and rescue element of the Council Tax precept for 2023/24 to £80.61, thereby representing an increase of £5 (or 6.6%) over the 2022/23 level for a Band D property.

662 Closed Session

The Panel did not retire into closed session as business under Item 11 was concluded in public session.

663 Work Programme

Considered –

The Secretariat report outlining the Panel's draft work programme.

It was noted that suggestions had been made in the meeting from Members in respect of further updates on convictions in the county and also on steps being taken to improve the prosecution rate for rape cases.

Resolved –

That the Panel approves it outline work programme.

664 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 12.20 pm.
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