

# North Yorkshire Council

## North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 12th June, 2024 in the Grand Meeting Room at County Hall, Northallerton, commencing at 10.30 am.

Councillors Danny Myers (City of York Council) in the Chair, Chris Aldred (North Yorkshire Council), Lindsay Burr MBE (North Yorkshire Council), Tim Grogan (North Yorkshire Council), Emilie Knight (City of York Council), Heather Moorhouse (North Yorkshire Council), Michael Pavlovic (City of York Council), Malcolm Taylor (North Yorkshire Council) and Peter Wilkinson (North Yorkshire Council).

Community Co-opted Members: Fraser Forsyth

David Skaith (Mayor of York and North Yorkshire)

Councillor Jo Coles (proposed appointee for Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime)

Officers from the York and North Yorkshire Office for Policing, Fire, Crime and Commissioning: Simon Dennis (Corporate Director OPFCC and Deputy MO for Policing, Fire and Crime (MCA)), Tamara Pattinson (Director, Delivery and Assurance), Jenni Newberry (Director of Commissioning, Criminal Justice and Partnerships), Amanda Wilkinson (Director of Public Confidence),.

Officers present: Diane Parsons (Principal Scrutiny Officer).

In attendance: Councillor Carl Les OBE (North Yorkshire Council); Amanda Bowers (Media Officer, YNY OPFCC), Paul Clark (Governance and Assurance Manager, MCA), Simon Jones (Communications and Engagement Manager, YNY OPFCC).

Apologies: Councillors Steve Shaw-Wright (North Yorkshire Council), Mags Godderidge and Martin Walker.

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### Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

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#### 1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. It was noted that Cllr Davis was attending as a substitute for Cllr Shaw-Wright. Those present were reminded of the need to be mindful of the meeting taking place within the pre-election period ahead of the General Election on 4<sup>th</sup> July and the attendant restrictions on councillors activities.

#### 2 Declarations of Interest

In the interests of transparency, Councillors Pavlovic and Myers declared that the proposed candidate for Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime is a colleague at City of York Council and further that Jo Coles was previously a colleague of Councillor Pavlovic's on the Executive at the council.

**3 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 5th February 2024**

**Resolved –**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

It was also noted that a Progress on Issues Raised update will be brought to the next Panel meeting in July.

**4 Consideration of Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved –**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 7 – should the Panel determine that it wishes to move into closed session at that point on the agenda - on the grounds that discussion would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

**5 Public Questions or Statements to the Panel**

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

**6 Confirmation Hearing for Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime - Procedure Note**

**Resolved –**

That the Panel noted the guidance note provided regarding its role and responsibilities during the Confirmation Hearing for Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime.

**6a Supporting Information from the Mayor for York and North Yorkshire**

**Considered –**

The supporting information provided to the Panel by the Mayor regarding the proposed appointment of a Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime.

In proposing Jo Coles as the preferred candidate, the Mayor spoke to Jo's experience politically and within a crime and justice consultancy, which he felt would in the round bring strong insight to the role. The Panel were advised that Jo's background will enable her to provide strategic leadership and direction and that she would be adept at influencing at the highest level, collaborating with partners.

**Resolved –**

That the Panel notes the supporting information furnished by the Mayor in support of the proposed appointee to the role of Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime.

## Personal statement from the preferred appointee

Considered –

The personal statement provided by Jo Coles in respect of the proposed appointment for Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime.

The Chair invited Jo to speak to her statement and outline her skills and experience for the role. Jo outlined the preparation she had undertaken for the role so far, speaking to various key partners. The Panel heard that Jo's professional background includes political roles in Westminster and voluntary sector roles including working in the youth sector. Jo felt it to be key that the public have confidence in the policing response and is keen to understand how a public health approach can help with early intervention and prevention. She also demonstrated her understanding of the current issues faced by both the police and fire and rescue services and that it will be important to keep on top of these.

The Panel then asked Jo a number of questions in order to be reassured that she would meet the minimum standards required for the role. These covered a range of issues relating to demonstration of professional competence and personal independence, as follows:

- Jo confirmed her understanding of the need to recognise the operational independence and both the police and fire and rescue services;
- The Panel reflected on media handling around operational policing matters and the appropriateness of the Deputy Mayor's involvement. Jo outlined that a balance must be struck in relation to communications around police investigations of scale but that operationally these are best led by the police themselves. Messaging must be clear on issues of public interest;
- Jo acknowledged the optics of being a York-based candidate working alongside a York-based Mayor but that she would ensure that she is able to listen to and represent the views of all communities from across York and North Yorkshire;
- In relation to handling potential differences in opinion between herself and the Mayor, Jo explained that she will have strong opinions on certain issues within her brief following on from relevant experience in her working life, however it is the Mayor who has the electoral mandate;
- The Panel asked about whether Jo has ever been resistant to change and were advised that Jo is open to change where this is data-led and evidence-driven;
- In terms of key challenges and opportunities within the proposed role, Jo identified that there is an opportunity to change and improve things within both services due to new and developing senior leadership. In particular she spoke to opportunities she perceived around preventative services to help reduce crime. In terms of challenges, Jo acknowledged the longevity of the Panel and that the MCA will be open to the Panel's views. Reference was also made to the budgetary challenges for both services and the fact that data and evidence will therefore be important in moving forward;
- Jo acknowledged that workforce morale in both services is very important, with a need to show appreciation as often as possible. The Panel were keen to understand how this married with ensuring that response and detection rates are optimal to enable early intervention or prevention. Jo underlined that the public need to have confidence in the response data although the data currently focusses on telephone response rates and there are broader aspects to consider;
- Members reflected on the relationship between the Panel and the Deputy Mayor role, which is about both support and challenge, and sought Jo's

views. Jo outlined that she will be open to the Panel's opinions and intends to arrange to meet Members in their communities. Jo also encouraged Panel members to raise issues with her outside of Panel meeting where helpful;

- In respect of how Jo perceives her role as Deputy Mayor, she underlined that she has been asked to serve and drive improvement due to her background, particularly in the youth sector and a crime and justice consultancy;
- The Panel paid tribute to the work developed under the previous Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner around tackling violence against women and girls and asked how Jo intends to continue this work. Jo provided illustration of her work in launching a joint domestic abuse strategy while serving as an Executive Member at City of York, her knowledge of the extent of recorded domestic abuse and the need to tackle misogyny more broadly;
- Jo acknowledged that she did not have experience of working on rural issues but that rural crime is significant and she intends to be out and about in communities as much as possible. She will put in place opportunities for both in-person and online surgeries to help overcome any geographical challenges;
- The Panel asked Jo to reflect on how she may work to ensure that the fire and rescue service has a more sustainable financial position over the longer term. Jo spoke to the challenges around the national funding formula and the need to ensure both firefighters and communities are not placed at unnecessary risk. She will seek to understand how central decisions have been formed and whether patterns have changed to help review what can be done;
- In terms of key priorities for the first twelve months in office, Jo felt it would be important to review the current Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan in terms of progress and the current position, identifying where there may be some differences in levels of focus. She explained that she would like to see a change in public confidence in twelve months and to have helped to stabilise the fire and rescue budget. Tackling violence against women and girls will continue to be a priority;
- Jo was asked about how she will work with the third sector. Jo acknowledged that there will need to be some stability and funding for the sector in terms of supporting early intervention and prevention so that organisations can plan adequately and employ staff. However at this stage she is keen to focus on any commissioning that is imminently required.

### **Resolved –**

That the Panel notes the personal statement provided by Jo Coles and her responses to the questions posed by the Panel at the Confirmation Hearing.

## **8**

### **Closed Session**

The Chair invited the Panel to consider whether it wished to retire into closed session to deliberate on its recommendation following the Confirmation Hearing. Members spoke to moving straight into recommendations and as such the Panel did not retire into closed session.

A recommendation was proposed by Councillor Wilkinson, seconded by Councillor Burr, that Jo Coles be recommended for the appointment to Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime with the Panel's full endorsement. The Panel voted unanimously in favour via a show of hands. Members added that they felt Jo to be a strong candidate and were impressed at her commitment to working with the Panel.

**Resolved –**

That the Panel:

- (a) does not need to retire into closed session to consider its recommendation regarding the proposed appointment; and
- (b) recommends that Jo Coles be appointed to the role of Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime.

**9 Work Programme**

Considered –

The report of the Panel Secretariat providing the Panel's outline work programme for 2024/25.

It was agreed that the outcomes of the HMICFRS 'PEEL' inspection report into North Yorkshire Police, including progress against findings, should be brought tot the next Panel meeting in July.

A discussion was held regarding the collaborative work among emergency service partners including the ambulance service and particularly working with the NHS and supporting vulnerable people. It was suggested that this could be incorporated into a paper on collaboration by the fire service which is currently on the programme for October. The Chair also recommended that a separate update on the Right Care, Right Person model would be helpful to schedule in. Other outstanding matters on the schedule will be directed as needed following discussions with the Mayor's office and OPFCC.

**Resolved –**

That the Panel notes the work programme and incorporates those items suggested.

**10 Date of Next Meeting**

In bringing the meeting to a close, the Chair welcomed Cllr Malcolm Taylor as a new Member to the Panel and acknowledged the contribution of Councillor Rich Maw, who has recently stood down from the Panel. The Chair also wished to thank Councillor Carl Les for his stewardship of the Panel over a number of years. It was agreed that letters of thanks would be sent to both councillors from the Chair.

The Panel were notified that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 10:30am at City of York Council's West Offices.

The meeting concluded at 12.07 pm.  
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