

# North Yorkshire Council

## North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of the meeting held in the Grand Meeting Room at County Hall, Northallerton on Thursday, 6 February 2025, commencing at 10.30 am.

Councillors Peter Wilkinson (North Yorkshire Council) in the Chair; Danny Myers, Chris Aldred, Tim Grogan, Emilie Knight, Heather Moorhouse, Michael Pavlovic, Steve Shaw-Wright and Malcolm Taylor Danny Myers, Chris Aldred, Tim Grogan, Emilie Knight, Heather Moorhouse, Michael Pavlovic, Steve Shaw-Wright and Malcolm Taylor (North Yorkshire Council).

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

David Skaith (Mayor of York and North Yorkshire).

Jo Coles (Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime).

Chief Constable Tim Forber (North Yorkshire Police).

Chief Fire Officer Jonathan Dyson (North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service).

Officers from the York and North Yorkshire Office for Police, Fire and Crime Commissioning: George Jabbour and Carl Les (Leader of the Council and Leader of The Conservative and Independents Group) Mark Ayres (Temporary Director of Public Confidence), George Jabbour and Carl Les (Leader of the Council and Leader of The Conservative and Independents Group).

Officers from the Mayoral Combined Authority: Rachel Antonelli (Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer), Mike Russell (Director of Resources).

Officers present: Will Baines and Diane Parsons (North Yorkshire Council).

In attendance: Councillors George Jabbour and Carl Les OBE (North Yorkshire Council)

Apologies: Councillor Lindsay Burr MBE.

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

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#### 59 Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted from Councillor Lindsay Burr MBE.

#### 60 Declarations of Interest

Mags Godderidge notified that she is CEO of Survive, which receives funding for its work from the Deputy Mayor.

Martin Walker notified that he is a Trustee of IDAS; a charity which receives funding from the Deputy Mayor's office.

In the interest of transparency, Councillor Taylor notified that as former Secretary of the North Yorkshire Police Federation and Misconduct Lead, he did work closely with

both the police's Professional Standards Department and the Vetting Unit during his previous tenure.

**61 Consideration of Exclusion of the Public**

The Chair moved that the Panel retains the privilege to retire into closed session if deemed necessary at Item 11, in consideration of the Mayor's precept proposals. Panel members voted unanimously to retain this privilege at Item 11.

**Resolved**

That the Panel moves into closed session under Item 11 to consider the Mayor's precept proposals.

**62 Minutes of the Panel Meeting held on 16th January 2025**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025, having been printed and circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Vice Chair as a correct record.

**63 Progress on Issues Raised by the Panel**

**Resolved**

That the Panel notes the report updating on progress made against issues raised by the Panel.

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

No questions or statements had been received by the Panel.

**65 Members' Questions**

Thanks were extended by a Panel Member to the Office of Police, Fire, Crime and Commissioning (OPFCC) for the assistance provided in facilitating a prompt response to North Yorkshire Council from North Yorkshire Police (NYP) on an urgent licensing matter.

Reference was made by a Member regarding the budget allocation directed towards promoting and embedding equality, diversity and inclusivity within West Yorkshire Police, following a recent Freedom of Information request made to them. The Mayor was asked about the budget allocated at NYP towards this and whether this could be an area for potential savings. The Mayor expressed confidence in the Chief Constable's operational management. The Chief Constable spoke to the importance of developing this area in order to promote recruitment and retention of staff who think differently, staff who can challenge, and to help build public confidence in policing.

The Mayor was asked about the new Victims' Centre and how he would be reassured that it would be operating to the highest standards. The Deputy Mayor will advised that she will continue to monitor how effectively the centre is working and will revert to the Panel with an update in the coming months.

Members asked about the recent review of neighbourhood policing and when the Panel (and public) might expect to see outcomes and an action plan. The Panel were advised that there will be a clear plan in place by the beginning of the next financial year and the approach will focus on whole-system outcomes. The Panel felt there is a need for both outcomes and clarity on PCSO numbers allocated, and it was also felt that total areas must be invested in to help prevent rural crime.

The Panel asked about the fire and rescue service policy regarding planning applications for battery storage across North Yorkshire in relation to ensuring and maintaining the public safety of sites which have been granted planning permission by the council. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the fire service is not a statutory consultee on such matters so can only advise planners in relation to the national councils' framework and work with premises subsequently on safety aspects. The Deputy Mayor highlighted this to be one of the aspects thrown up by a changing environmental demand picture for the service and one which she is intends to continue to make representations on to government.

### **Resolved**

That the Panel:

- (a) Receives further information regarding NYP spend on equality, diversity and inclusivity, prior to the next meeting; and
- (b) Receives an update on the outcomes of the neighbourhood policing review in due course.

66

### **HMICFRS report into the effectiveness of integrity arrangements in North Yorkshire Police**

Considered

The verbal update from the Deputy Mayor regarding how she is ensuring that adequate progress is being delivered against the outcomes of the recent inspection report into the effectiveness of integrity arrangements at NYP.

The Deputy Mayor outlined for the Panel how she monitors improvements with NYP and how this is discussed in public setting through the Online Public Meetings. The Deputy Mayor referred to the additional resources put in place at both NYP and the OPFCC to ensure that the service around complaints and standards can be maintained.

The Panel noted the inspection finding that vetting of police staff and officers is good. However, the other areas of the inspection gave concern and it was felt that progress against the action plan needed to be reported back in to the Panel subsequently. The Chief Constable expanded on how he ensures that improvement targets are tracked and signed off and that more investigative capacity has been put into Professional Standards (PSD). Panel Members noted the inspectorate's concerns around some cases being dealt with in basic command units rather than PSD and conveyed a concern that if work stops on a case where an officer resigns then that person may be able to re-join public service or a similar workforce setting. The concern conveyed was around public perception of NYP seeming to 'mark its own homework'.

The Deputy Mayor acknowledged that speed of process is important and that the role played by the OPFCC early on is also key to this. The Deputy Mayor also made reference to the fact that police complaints handling follows a different model in

North Yorkshire compared with many other areas following changes under a previous Commissioner and that while she is not averse to changing the model, this would only be done if the outcomes would result in a better service so this needs to be reviewed.

It was concluded by the Panel that in addition to progress updates from the Deputy Mayor in relation to the inspection report, the Panel would find it helpful to look in more detail at complaints handling in both PSD and the OPFCC in either May or July.

### **Resolved**

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the update provided by the Deputy Mayor and colleagues in relation to progress against the recent inspectorate report;
- (b) Receives an update from the Deputy Mayor in due course regarding her assurance that improvements continue to be made against the NYP action plan; and
- (c) Receives a further report examining complaints handling processes, timescales and improvements made within both the OPFCC and PSD.

67

### **Force Control Room Performance**

Considered

The report of the Deputy Mayor providing an annual update on the performance of the Force Control Room (FCR) in respect of handling of 999 and 101 calls, along with an update on the efficacy of the Right Care, Right Person framework.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor underlined the need for Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) to preserve police officer time on cases appropriate to police handling but ensuring that communities are also supported. The Deputy Mayor highlighted a recent meeting with the Integrated Care Board to ensure work on this is joined up and commended the response provided by the mental health team based in the FCR.

Panel members commended the turn-around made in handling of 101 calls over the last year. The Deputy Mayor was asked if abandonment figures can be provided as figures rather than percentages and also how the FCR knows who abandons 101 calls and what happens to these. The Chief Constable explained how digitisation of processes and channel shift to online can help to track abandonment and can bring waiting times down. This is an area for investment. Calls can be reduced by more smartly working to update victims of crime too.

The Mayor was asked what is being done by NYP with partner agencies to use data captured on incidents regarding risk of serious harm to use this to mitigate a public health issue for example. The Mayor acknowledged that this would be an important piece feed into early intervention and prevention work.

### **Resolved**

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the update report provided on the Force Control Room and Right Care, Right Person; and
- (b) Receives clarification on the numbers of abandoned calls to 101.

## **68 Panel Scrutiny of the Precept Proposals**

### **Resolved**

That the Panel notes the guidance provided by the Panel Secretariat in relation to the Panel's responsibilities in consideration of the Mayor's precept proposals.

## **69 Policing Precept Proposal 2025/26**

### **Considered**

The report from the Mayor seeking the Panel's approval of their Council Tax policing precept proposal for 2025/26 of an increase of £14 (or 4.56%).

The Deputy Mayor provided an introduction to both the policing and fire and rescue reports put before the Panel, referring in particular to recent correspondence written by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to government with concerns regarding the loss of key grants for the fire and rescue service. The Deputy Mayor summarised the Devolution Minister's response, acknowledging the need for longer term funding settlements. It was agreed that this correspondence would be circulated to the wider Panel. The Chair highlighted that the Panel had also written to government recently regarding removal of the Rural Services Delivery Grant and Services Grant/Funding Guarantee, along with the need for flooding response to be placed on a statutory footing for funding.

The Panel raised a number of questions around the following:

- Whether weighting needs to be given to the public consultation responses given the proportionately low response from City of York area;
- The degree of comfort and rationale around police reserve levels;
- The benchmark figure applied to the benefit due to policing and fire budgets as a result of the implementation of North Yorkshire Council's new policy on double Council Tax revenue for second homes;
- The impact and strategic direction of the Enable shared services collaboration programme;
- The rationale for the increase in the police overtime budget;
- The context for the decrease forecasted in PCSO pay; and
- Potential typographical errors between the policing and fire reports in relation to tax base assumptions.

The following summarises the key responses provided:

- No weighting is applied to public responses on the precept consultation but a broad look is taken across all aspects. A slightly less positive response was received from those on lower incomes but a strong response was otherwise received to the proposed increase.
- Any money held in reserves is not in operational delivery. NYP is in a strong financial position with a relatively low level of borrowing. Michael Porter outlined that he would like the force to get to a position of significant contributions being made from the revenue programme into the capital programme.
- Around £1.75m is estimated to be the benefit to the services derived from implementation of the double Council Tax.
- A full review has been undertaken of Enable and business cases created.

The Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer have clear agreement on making the collaboration work with a service that can strategically align to both services. The 'Enable' title has been disbanded as the service is not viewed as a separate entity.

- The Chief Constable wants to prioritise a victim-focussed service and for more complex and difficult cases, overtime is appropriate.
- There are a number of PCSO vacancies as some have become police officers and it will take some time to get these numbers back up.

### **Resolved**

That the Panel notes the information provided in support of its consideration of the Mayor's precept proposal for policing.

[The Chief Constable left the meeting at the end of this item].

**70**

### **Draft 2025/26 Fire Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan Proposal**

Considered

The report from the Mayor proposing an allocation of their general budget for fire and rescue services in 2025/26, representing a precept increase of £24 for a Band D property.

The Mayor introduced the report by referring to the long-standing financial challenges for the fire and rescue service which were well known to the Panel. The Mayor thanked the Panel and the Leader of North Yorkshire Council for supporting efforts to highlight the service's concerns to government over recent years.

The Mayor was asked whether the inflation forecast in the draft budget of 2% appeared modest in comparison with the Bank of England and Office for Budget Responsibility. The Panel were advised by Michael Porter that the intention is to drive through efficiency savings in future years and that it was expected that this would absorb future levels of inflation.

Members reiterated the need to ensure government are mindful of the impact of the removal of the Rural Services Delivery Grant and that flooding response should be placed on a statutory basis. The Deputy Mayor underlined that there is an opportunity to do something now to address the long-term budgetary issues such as purchasing much-needed equipment for firefighters. It was acknowledged that the £24 increase requested by the Mayor for a Band D property is significant but that this difficult decision had to be made because of the gap in finances from over a decade.

The Chair then invited all those not on the Panel to withdraw from the meeting and the Panel went into closed session to consider its recommendations at 12:59.

### **Resolved**

That the Panel notes the report provided in supporting its consideration of the Mayor's proposed precept for fire and rescue services in 2025/26.

**71**

### **Closed Session**

After a period of time following discussion in private session, the Chair resumed the meeting held in public at 13:12.

The Chair advised the Mayor that the Panel had voted unanimously to recommend that both the policing precept and fire and rescue precept be set at the levels proposed by him.

In relation to the fire and rescue service, the Chair wished to note that while the Panel has been well placed to receive detailed reports over recent years to help support the Panel's understanding of the need for this significant level of investment, this may be less apparent to the taxpayer. As such, the Panel recommended that the Mayor ensures that accessible communications are provided for the public – now and over time – to highlight the importance of raising the precept to this level and what this money will be spent on.

### **Resolved**

That the Panel:

- (a) Supports the Mayor's proposal to increase the policing precept for 2025/26 to £320.86, representing an increase of £14 (or 4.56%) for a Band D property; and
- (b) Supports the Mayor's proposal to increase the fire element of the Mayoral General Precept for 2025/26 to £107.02, representing an increase of £24 for a Band D property.

## **72 Recruitment of Independent Co-opted Members to the Panel**

Considered

The report from the Panel Secretariat proposing a process and timescales for the recruitment of the Panel's independent co-opted members.

The Panel were advised that the terms of office for the Panel's current co-opted members expire in October and November 2025. All are eligible to apply for a further four-year term and the Panel must have a minimum of two co-opted members. It was proposed that a task group is formed from the Panel to oversee this process, starting in the summer, with a smaller set of Members to be involved in interviews into the autumn. The co-opted members will be appointed by the Panel in January 2026.

It was agreed the Chair and Vice Chair would be part of this task group and interest was also indicated by Councillors Malcolm Taylor, Tim Grogan, Heather Moorhouse, Steve Shaw-Wright and Emilie Knight, to be determined depending on availability.

### **Resolved**

That the Panel:

- (a) Notes the report; and
- (b) Agrees the principle of a task group which will begin work to oversee recruitment arrangements from the summer.

## **73 Work Programme**

Considered

The report of the Panel Secretariat proposing a programme of work for the Panel for 2025/26.

It was noted that the following issues had been identified for inclusion:

- Sexual Assault Referral Centre – update on the Deputy Mayor’s monitoring of standard of service provided to victims;
- Further update from the Deputy Mayor on progress achieved against the outcomes of the HMICFRS report; and
- Complaints handling in the OPFCC and PSD.

It was also suggested that a report on neighbourhood policing including performance data be brought to the Panel.

The Chair noted that the Chief Constable had also offered to provide an informal briefing for the Panel with opportunity to introduce them to his senior team.

### **Resolved**

That the Panel agrees the proposed programme of work, incorporating the suggestions highlighted in the meeting.

#### **74 Any other items**

The Panel were advised that no urgent items has been raised with the Chair.

#### **75 Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 at 10:30am at Selby Civic Centre.

The meeting concluded at 1.20 pm.  
DP.