

# North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

21 January 2026

## Appointment of co-opted independent members

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To recommend the co-option of Fraser Forsyth, Mags Godderidge and Caroline O'Neill as independent members of the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires that at least two members of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel are co-opted by the Panel. The aim in co-opting members is to support the Panel by bringing “a unique set of expertise, ensuring that the necessary skills and knowledge are available for a panel to discharge its scrutiny function effectively”.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 Co-opted members are independent, that is they are not:
- a member of the staff of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor for North Yorkshire;
  - employees of North Yorkshire Police (operational or civilian) or North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service;
  - a Member of Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales or the Scottish Parliament; or
  - a member of a local authority which is covered by the North Yorkshire Police force area.
- 2.3 The period of appointment for co-opted, independent members is four years (renewable up to a maximum of two terms/eight years). The term of the current co-opted members ends on 21 January 2026. It is therefore incumbent on the Panel to appoint a minimum of two members in this capacity to serve on the Panel from 21 January 2026. As Members will be aware, the Panel requested that a third co-option be enabled by the Home Office in 2021 in order to bring a wider diversity of experience to the Panel and as such there are three vacancies to which a co-opted member should be appointed.

### 3.0 Recruitment and selection process

- 3.1 The Panel's Arrangements state:

“The Panel shall put in place arrangements to ensure that appointments of co-opted Members are undertaken following public advertisement in accordance with the following principles:

- a. The appointment will be made on merit of candidates whose skills, experience and qualities are considered best to ensure the effective functioning of the Panel;

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<sup>1</sup> “Police, fire and crime panels: independent member recruitment guidance”; Home Office (June 2023)

- b. The selection process must be fair, objective, impartial and consistently applied to all candidates who will be assessed against the same pre-determined criteria; and
  - c. The selection process will be conducted transparently with information about the requirements for the appointment and the process being publicly advertised and made available with a view to attracting a strong and diverse field of suitable candidates.
- 3.2 The Panel agreed in February 2025 that a number of its Members would form a task group to oversee the recruitment exercise and selection process; specifically to:
  - (a) review the application pack material and recommend changes where appropriate;
  - (b) oversee the arrangements for recruitment;
  - (c) agree the shortlisting of applicants;
  - (d) interview all shortlisted applicants; and
  - (e) agree three applicants be recommended to the panel for co-option.
- 3.3 The following members comprised the membership of the task group:

Councillors: Tim Grogan, Heather Moorhouse, Emilie Knight, Danny Myers, Steve Shaw-Wright and Peter Wilkinson.
- 3.4 The group agreed that a light-touch skills audit would be undertaken of councillor members on the Panel to identify whether any particular skills or areas of knowledge could be strengthened through co-option. The exercise didn't highlight specific 'gap' areas of concern but the group agreed it would be helpful to continue to seek experience from a range of backgrounds including legal, finance/business, health, criminal justice, voluntary sector, victims' services and commissioning.
- 3.5 As a result, the group agreed a wide range of channels through which to direct promotion of the vacancies. The vacancies were advertised extensively in early September 2025 via council recruitment pages and news releases, the voluntary and community sector, health networks, community safety and safeguarding contacts, the Policing, Fire and Crime Team (MCA), parish and town councils, National Park Authorities and schools, to name a few. An application pack with background information on the role and responsibilities was also made available from the Panel's website.
- 3.6 The recruitment generated a number of enquiries. In total, 21 applications were received. One of these was withdrawn before the closing date. An additional application was also made after the closing date and as such rejected, particularly in view of the high number of applications already received within the advertised timeframe. This was just slightly higher than the number of applications received in 2021 and applications came from a wide and strong field; a number of senior-level professionals or retired professionals from backgrounds in law, the voluntary sector, probation, health, policing/criminal justice to name a few. Enquiries made to neighbouring Panels suggests that the approach taken to promotion of the opportunities had been very effective as Panels can sometimes struggle to attract a significant number of applicants and/or from a strong field.
- 3.7 Following shortlisting by the task group, eight candidates were invited to interview (four male, four female; three living or working in York and five living or working in North Yorkshire). The task group agreed that four Members would conduct the interviews in early November, namely Councillors Wilkinson, Grogan, Myers and Knight.

- 3.8 The interview was an opportunity to find out more about each candidate and give them opportunity to ask more about the role, framed around a number of set interview questions intended to draw out motivation, knowledge and strengths against the core competency areas. Based on the assessment of both the interview performance and the application forms submitted, the interviewing panel decided to recommend three people for appointment.
- Fraser Forsyth
  - Mags Godderidge
  - Caroline O'Neill
- 3.9 Fraser Forsyth and Mags Godderidge are already well-known to Panel members and partners, having served on the Panel since autumn 2021. Fraser was formerly a councillor and group leader on Aberdeen City Council, during which time he held a number of roles including Vice Convenor of the Grampian Joint Police Board. In his professional life he has spent many years working within mental health, alcohol addiction support and criminal justice. He is currently employed by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service working with offenders released early on licence to a hostel setting. He is also a volunteer tour guide in York.
- 3.10 Mags Godderidge has been the CEO of Survive for the last five years; a charity which supports survivors of rape and sexual assault. Prior to this, Mags was a lead investigator at the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and has spent a number of years working at a senior level in the VCS around mental health support and counselling services, including as manager of the Nightline charity. Mags holds a number of other volunteer roles within her local community and in York and is also a volunteer on the 'Act on IICSA' working group campaigning for implementation of the recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).
- 3.11 Caroline O'Neill has recently retired from working for Community First Yorkshire; an organisation which provides support and advocacy for rural communities, voluntary and community organisations, parish councils, and social enterprises in North Yorkshire. In her eight years there, Caroline has held a number of senior roles around partnerships, community support and policy and her career in the voluntary sector spans 13 years, with roles previously at North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations. Prior to this, Caroline worked briefly at North Yorkshire County Council in education strategy and investment and for an extensive period at the Learning and Skills Council and NY Training and Enterprise Council, among other roles.
- 3.12 The interview panel felt that in combination, the three proposed appointees will bring a diverse range of experience encompassing mental health/counselling, probation, VCS, victim services and local authority roles. The Panel is invited to formally agree the appointment of the appointees for a four-year term to January 2030. Clearly there are likely to be changes in that time to scrutiny arrangements as a result of the planned White Paper on Police Reform (expected early 2026), which may carry implications for these co-opted appointments. However, it's important to ensure continuity of appointments at this stage so that the Panel and scrutiny can continue to function effectively.
- 3.13 Following the interview process, the Chair has been in contact with the outgoing co-opted member, Martin Walker, to convey the Panel's gratitude for his contribution and commitment over the last four years, supporting the Panel in its scrutiny of two Commissioners and transitioning arrangements with the introduction of the Mayoral

framework. A formal letter of thanks has also been provided to Martin from the Chair and also on behalf of the wider Panel.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from this report. Co-opted members receive a small allowance in recognition of their value to the Panel and this will continue at least into 2026/27, subject to any future review by the NYC Independent Remuneration Panel. The Home Office grant awarded annually to North Yorkshire Council for supporting the Panel already provides for three co-opted appointees.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The Panel must legally have at least two independent co-opted members but as outlined at 2.3, the Home Office has consented to the North Yorkshire Panel having three appointments and they have confirmed that this consent continues regardless of the named appointees as the purpose is to enable greater complementarity of skills.

5.2 The implementation of the White Paper on Police Reform in 2026 and government plans to abolish Panels by May 2028 may potentially impact upon the tenure of co-opted members appointed now but this is as yet unknown and further guidance will be provided once it becomes available.

#### **6.0 Equalities Implications**

6.1 An Equalities Monitoring Form was used as part of the application process but removed from applications prior to shortlisting to ensure anonymity and was not used as part of the shortlisting process. However, Panel members may find it helpful to note that of the applications received and processed, 65% identified as male, 35% identified as female; 89% identified as “White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British” and 72% of applicants were aged between 50 and 74. One applicant identified as having a disability.

6.2 The promotion of the appointments was planned to ensure a wide reach across voluntary and community sector contacts in North Yorkshire and York along with councils, health trusts, probation service and other public bodies. The process was also made as accessible as possible to all. The application pack and form were offered in alternative formats and the Panel’s supporting officer was available to speak to interested parties ahead of the closing date. Candidates were asked about any particular needs prior to interview so that arrangements could be made as required.

#### **7.0 Climate Change Implications**

7.1 There are no significant climate change implications arising from this report.

#### **8.0 Recommendations**

8.1 That the Panel co-opts Fraser Forsyth, Mags Godderidge and Caroline O’Neill as independent members, to serve until the Panel’s meeting in January 2030.

**Background Documents:**

["Police, fire and crime panels: independent member recruitment guidance"; Home Office \(June 2023\)](#)

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