**Item 2**



**West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel**

**Draft Minutes**

**8th November 2024, Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Lynn Masterman - Wakefield Council (Deputy Chair)

Councillor Nicole Sharpe - Leeds Council

Councillor Andrew Carter - Leeds Council

Councillor Nussrat Mohammed - Bradford Council

Councillor Chris Hayden - Bradford Council

Councillor Brenda Monteith - Calderdale Council

Councillor Shazad Fazal - Calderdale Council

Councillor Anthony Smith - Kirklees Council

Councillors Jackie Ferguson - Wakefield Council

Mr Trevor Lake - Independent

Mrs Jo Sykes - Independent

In attendance

Alison Lowe - Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

Angela Taylor - West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Wendy Stevens - West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Julie Reid - West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Robert Forrest - West Yorkshire Combined Authority

John Robins - West Yorkshire Police

Katherine Johnson - West Yorkshire Police

Sharon Fraser - Wakefield Council

Samantha Wilkinson - Wakefield Council

Fiona Bernardo - Wakefield Council

**1. Acceptance of apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Eileen Taylor, Celia Hickson, and Gwen Lowe. Councillor Lynn Masterman chaired the meeting in Councillor Taylor’s absence.

**2. To approve, as a correct record and deal with any matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of the Police and Crime Panel held on 13th September 2024.**

2.1 The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting following the addition of Cllr Lynn Masterman as in attendance.

2.2 The Deputy Mayor was asked to update the Panel on the status of the ongoing investigation into the disorder in Harehills over the summer. The Deputy Mayor replied that she was confident that investigations were ongoing as planned and that the next stage of planned public consultation and engagement would be the postponed Extraordinary Community Outcomes Meeting (COM) on 26 November. The Deputy Mayor confirmed that the Leeds Community Safety Partnership is involved in community cohesion work surrounding these incidents

**3. To note any items which the Chair has agreed to add to the agenda on the grounds of urgency**

3.1There were no urgent items to add to the agenda.

**4. Members’ Declaration of Interest**

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

**5. Mayor’s Draft Annual Report 2023-24**

5.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, which gives an overview of the work to date on the annual report, alongside a draft version of the report. She asked Panel Members to share their thoughts on the draft so far and any suggestions they may have for improvements or additions before it’s finalised in the next couple of months. The Deputy Mayor drew attention to the report’s focus on the partnership work between the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and West Yorkshire Police (WYP) including the initiative to install PCSOs on buses and the Women’s Safety Unit.

5.2 Panel welcomed the report which they agree was well written and provides a good and succinct summary of actions and achievements in delivering the Police and Crime Plan over the past year. Panel thanked the DMPC and her team for the work they have put into ensuring the annual report is informative and an easy-to-read public friendly document.

5.3 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor to add some context around the net impact of the reported increase in numbers of frontline police officers and staff (this is reported as 895 which surpasses the original target of 750 recruits). The Deputy Mayor replied that the figures did show the net impact, and total figures for recruitment over the period since the pledge had been made had topped 1,000 recruits.

5.4 Panel asked if more statistics could be added to the report to enable comparisons of different categories of crime. The Deputy Mayor reminded Panel that quarterly reports show statistical breakdowns of crime levels, and that the Annual Report intended to take a more narrative approach, however, she was happy to look at adding these in where they added value and context to the text.

5.5 Discussion took place around the reality and perception of crime – elected members hear anecdotal evidence within their wards that crime is increasing, however, the Chief Constable assured Panel that there has been a 9.9% reduction in crime in West Yorkshire over the last twelve months.

5.6 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor if she could expand on the section of the Report on page 18 which details the benefits of PACE beds compared to previous practices of keeping a child who has been refused bail in custody and take the opportunity to demonstrate the significant positive benefit of the scheme, and what the LCJB partners are doing to meet these challenges. She acknowledged the request and will look to do this.

5.7 Panel drew attention to some minor technical amendments which needed to be made to the penultimate paragraph on page 32 around the Joint Independent Audit and Ethics Committee, and its scope. It was also felt that the report could expand on how the Mayor holds the Chief Constable to account in this specific area.

5.8 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor to consider providing further detail around the Right Care Right Person National Partnership Agreement to aid public understanding. The Deputy Mayor reiterated the impact of mental health on police resources. The Right Care, Right Person initiative, which looks at more effective triaging with cases clearly related to mental health was trialled by Humberside Police and adopted widely following the success of the trial. The initiative works with partners to ensure that providers take responsibility for the care of vulnerable people as far as possible, and only involve the police when a situation becomes an emergency. Alongside this WYP support the organisations involved in vulnerable people’s care with initiatives such as the Herbert protocol.

5.9 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor if she was concerned about privately run homes for vulnerable children. She replied that her and the Mayor were both very concerned about this and had used their influencing powers to raise these concerns with the Leaders of all West Yorkshire local authorities (LAs). Their concerns centre around unscrupulous practices of private businesses such as buying cheap properties and running unregulated care facilities. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have asked LAs to look at what powers they have to protect children in these circumstances, and they reported back that Leeds Council for example were working with housing services, Ofsted, licencing and planning teams and more to adopt a wide ranging response to the issue. The Deputy Mayor told Panel that the five leaders had agreed to raise the issue at a national level via Directors of Adult Social Care and their national membership organisation ADASS, who are undertaking work with the national government to prevent unregulated homes setting up and charging LAs extortionate prices to provide care for vulnerable people.

5.10 Panel asked for a point to be clarified in the Annual Report at page 6. Panel felt that the way the 80% victim satisfaction is presented reads as if this refers to overall satisfaction, whereas it actually refers to victims of domestic abuse. Overall victim satisfaction is consistently lower at around 72%.

5.11 Finally, Panel asked if, where a percentage response to a survey is quoted, the actual numbers of respondents could also be recorded to give context on the size of survey – for example, the Vision Zero survey referenced on page 20.

**5.12 RESOLVED**

5.12.1 The Deputy Mayor to consider the recommended inclusions to the Annual Report.

**6. Medium Term Financial Forecast**

6.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, which gives an update on the current 2024/25 financial position, an overview of the Medium-Term Financial Forecast for 2025/26 and beyond, and a summary of the likely factors impacting police budgets in future years. She believed that none of the information contained in the report would be a surprise, based on the high level of financial pressures and constraints that WYP were operating under.

6.2 Following the Autumn Budget on 30 October, the Mayor is waiting for information from the government around how police forces will be compensated for the rise in employer National Insurance contributions.

6.3 Panel asked if the Mayor’s office were making plans to manage a worst-case scenario if no compensation for increased employer contributions was available. The Deputy Mayor replied that they were, and that a worst-case assumption was an additional cost of £10m per year. She was hopeful that this would not be the case, and that a settlement would be provided to offset the NI rise based on the same formula share as the national pay grants. On further questioning, the Deputy Mayor accepted that if no compensation was received that the additional employer NI contributions would the cost the Force £30m over the timeline of the paper. She stressed that she did not think this would be the case however and was expecting clarification from the Home Office around 2nd December.

6.4 Panel questioned what appeared to be a 14% increase in the Deputy Mayor’s office staffing costs. The Deputy Mayor replied that the cost of the team had previously remained unchanged for a significant amount of time. A proportion of the money for new staff had come from grants to establish initiatives such as the Women’s Safety Unit. She was satisfied that the costs were reasonable and necessary to put together the right team to deliver the Police and Crime Plan.

6.5 Panel asked for clarification around the capital forecasts at 4.4 of the report, which seemed heavily weighted down over the coming years, and how that might impact police operations. The Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) explained that large projects in the estates programme will tail off in the coming years with the completion of schemes such as the new district police headquarters for Kirklees.

6.6 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor if she was assured of the sustainability of the reserves position within WYP, considering the figures show that in 2028, levels are predicted to drop below the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recommended minimum levels of 2.5%. The ACO responded that the WYP reserves strategy has a target figure of 2.5-3.5% – however, this is not a legal requirement and is a strategic decision for the Force. She acknowledged that the Force will have to add to the reserves leading up to this time, and this was being planned for.

6.7 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor how assured she was that reserves within WYP will be kept at a manageable level which will enable the Force to deal with unforeseen expenses, such as happened recently within South Yorkshire Police due to an accounting oversight. The Deputy Mayor replied that she was confident that WYP were correctly dealing with their financial situation, including management of the reserves, and as a mark of this confidence, she had invited Home Office to come up to West Yorkshire to inspect the Force’s financial standing so as to understand the reality for a large police force. She added that the focus on Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) would help the Force to deliver necessary changes and efficiencies.

6.8 Panel suggested that a presentation provided separately to members on PBB doesn’t provide information on the success or ambition of the PBB, which it was agreed to provide as part of the precept commitments, and that the presentation shows the principles of the scheme but does not provide the assurance Panel sought. Panel were concerned that the report indicates how changes may be needed to services and / or staffing levels depending on the amount that can be achieved through productivity savings. The Deputy Mayor replied that she was discussing all options with WYP, with nothing agreed yet. She committed to updating Panel around the time of the precept in February 2025 on the progress of work to close the financial gap.

**6.9 RESOLVED**

**6.9.1**  Panel noted the report.

**6.9.2** The DMPC agreed to provide Panel with more information on PBB and the progress on the work to close the financial gap as part of the precept process in February.

**7. Precept Consultation**

7.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, which had been written before a working group of Panel members and Policing and Crime staff had met in fulfilment of a precept commitment to look at peer surveys from across the Yorkshire and Humber region and discuss the quality, content and format of future budget consultations. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged Panel concerns around the lack of information and precept options given to the public and the timescale for completing the consultation and she had spoken to the Mayor about potential options for the next survey. She hoped that this would be live by 2nd December, significantly earlier in the month than last year’s survey, but told Panel that they wouldn’t put the survey out without knowing what the precept settlement would be so that date may change.

7.2 The Deputy Mayor told Panel that herself and the Mayor may include a higher option for the precept in the survey, but they were not prepared to include a lower cost option because they felt that they would be unable to deliver that based on the financial needs of WYP.

7.3 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor if she was assured that taking this route fulfilled the legal requirement set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 for a consultation. The Deputy Mayor replied that she did, and that their approach had not been challenged so far.

7.4 Panel again expressed concern about the timelines for the survey, which coincides with the Christmas holiday period. Panel drew attention to some Force areas who had started their consultation period already without knowing the precept settlement for the current year. The Deputy Mayor reiterated that she was not prepared to send out the survey until she knew what the precept settlement was going to be.

7.5 The Chair of the working group (Trevor Lake) reminded the Deputy Mayor that the Mayor had made a commitment following the precept for 2024/25 to consider alternative ways of managing the next survey in terms of process and questions asked. The Deputy Mayor replied that she and the Mayor had considered the options and had made a final decision to not include lower options, and not go out to survey without knowing the detail of the government precept settlement. Cllr Anthony Smith, who sat on the working group, wanted to put on record that his views aligned with the Finance Link member on this.

7.6 Panel strongly felt that this approach does not amount to consultation and not help public confidence or understanding of the difficult decisions which need to be made. The Deputy Mayor believed that, in voting for Tracy Brabin as West Yorkshire Mayor this year, the public were content with the consultation, which has been the same for the previous three years, supplemented by in-person consultation to widen reach and understanding.

7.7 The Chair of the working group spoke of Panel’s remit and role which is to make recommendations and have them considered, and that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor’s views shouldn’t preclude them from looking at better ways to undertake the consultation, and how other Force areas conduct theirs.

7.8 The Deputy Mayor reiterated that she has listened, and is incorporating feedback and learning into the narrative, however she confirmed that she is still not prepared to give a lower financial option to the public that she believes she would be unable to deliver.

**7.9 RESOLVED**

**7.9.1** That the Mayor and her team incorporate some of the feedback and learning from other police areas into the narrative and endeavour to launch the consultation immediately after the funding settlement is announced.

**8.**  **Mayor’s Response to any current issues**

8.1 The Deputy Mayor shared her experience of a recent Home Office Knife Enabled Robbery task force which she had been invited to attend. The event focused on retail crime and mobile phone theft, and there is an ongoing piece of work to look at what initiatives might work in this area. She was able to celebrate and showcase the work undertaken by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership at the event.

8.2 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor had recently attended a Reclaim the Night event which was attended by over 200 people. She saw this as phase 2 of the conversation about the safe use of parks following on from the University of Leeds report into park design.

8.3 The Deputy Mayor celebrated the one year anniversary of the Women’s Safety Unit, a partnership between the VRP, WYP and WYCA. She shared how data gathered from the Unit shows green shoots of success, with improved outcomes for rape victims, a drop in domestic abuse call-outs, and an increase in the issue of preventative orders. In addition, the smart water initiative has proved successful. As a result, the Mayor has agreed to fund the Unit for a second year. It was noted that this funding is matched by the VRP and WYP.

8.4 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor if the Unit had any involvement around addressing drink spiking. She replied that around October and November 2022, the police had seen substantial increases in reported drink spiking, following which initiatives were set up, and investment made into schemes such as taxi marshals, the Walk Safe app, and the Ask for Angela initiative. Over the last year, data has shown that reports of spiking dropped considerably, however resources are still committed within WYP to this area of work.

**9. Published Key Decisions**

9.1 The Published Key Decisions were noted.

**10. Agreed Actions Log**

10.1 The Deputy Mayor was asked to address outstanding items within the Agreed Actions Log. In particular, Panel asked for a discussion around a paper sent in relation to the action at 5.15.1 from 1st March 2024 which Panel felt did not full address their concern, and asked for it to be added to a future agenda along with the missing information.

**10.2 RESOLVED**

**10.2.1** That the DMPC address outstanding items within the Agreed Actions Log including clarification on the numbers of frontline officers and staff who have been recruited since 2021 also broken down by ethnic minority groups where possible, to be added to a future Panel agenda.

**11. Forward Plan**

11.1 The Forward Plan was noted.

**12. Complaints received by the Panel**

12.1 The Complaints Lead acknowledged the updates to previous complaints set out in the report. Full Panel would be undertaking a review of decision made by the Complaints Sub-Committee following the conclusion of the meeting.

**14. Any Other Business**

14.1 There was no other business raised.

**14. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

14.1 The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be held at 10.00 am on Friday, 13th December 2024 in the Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield.