**Item 2**



**West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel**

**Draft Minutes**

**13th September 2024, Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Eileen Taylor - Leeds Council

Councillor Nicole Sharpe - Leeds Council

Councillor Andrew Carter - Leeds Council

Councillor Nussrat Mohammed - Bradford Council

Councillor Celia Hickson - Bradford Council

Councillor Chris Hayden - Bradford Council

Councillor Brenda Monteith - Calderdale Council

Councillor Gwen Lowe - Kirklees Council

Councillor Anthony Smith - Kirklees Council

Councillor Lynn Masterman - Wakefield Council

Mr Trevor Lake - Independent

Mrs Jo Sykes - Independent

In attendance

Tracy Brabin - Mayor of West Yorkshire

Alison Lowe - Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

Liz Hunter - West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Wendy Stevens - West Yorkshire Combined Authority

John Robins - West Yorkshire Police

Russ Hughes - 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 Councillors Jackie Ferguson and Shazad Fazal.

**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 12th July 2024.**

2.1 The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and there were no matters arising.

**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. PEEL assessment of West Yorkshire Police**

5.1 The Mayor introduced her report, which updates the Panel on the latest cycle of PEEL inspections. She asked Panel to take note of comparisons within her report to West Yorkshire Police (WYP)’s Most Similar Forces (MSF) inspection scores, to help understand the context of the policing landscape.

5.2 The Mayor highlighted that the inspection had found 18 areas of improvement, and no areas for concern. She also emphasized the WYP were the largest police force not to be in special measures following an inspection, and that governance within the Force had been shown to be robust.

5.3 Panel asked a question around a disparity they felt existed between the PEEL report and some of the performance indicators brought to Panel on a quarterly basis. To prevent unanticipated surprises in future inspection reports, Panel asked the Mayor if she thought that the current performance reporting regime focused on the correct measures and outcomes.

5.4 The Mayor replied that she had 100% confidence in the measures used, but that some disparities may be caused by unaligned timescales in reporting. The performance measures currently used are taken from the previous Police and Crime Plan and were agreed at the time of its writing. Plan measures also include areas based on public feedback whereas the PEEL report is an operational report and uses His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) standardised measures and outcomes. The Mayor went on to say that she would be happy to discuss different ways of reporting if needed.

5.5 The Deputy Mayor added that both herself and the Mayor had not been surprised by the report, and that she was alive to the current situation in all areas for improvement which had been highlighted by the Inspector. She did feel however that comments on the use of force in the report were concerning, and that the behaviour of inexperienced officers may have led to an increase in the use of handcuffs. She committed to applying better scrutiny in this area in the future.

5.6 The Deputy Mayor reassured Panel that all 18 areas for improvement have trackers set up to measure progress. She added that she was proud of the recording crime measure and was satisfied that WYPs crime data recording is robust.

5.7 The Deputy Mayor was aware that the speed of recruitment may have meant that some training was not given where needed or completed properly. She also told Panel that WYP do amend and change their performance reporting to match the framework for inspections, and that the Force have raised concerns themselves with the inspectorate around the choice of measures.

5.8 The Deputy Mayor and the Chief Constable asked Panel to share which parts of the report had come as a surprise, as they were confident that performance in all areas of the inspection had been shared with Panel over the reporting period.

5.9 Panel raised the issue of support for officers to complete timely Professional Development Reviews (PDR). This has been raised as a concern in previous Panel meetings and was highlighted in the Inspection report. Panel highlighted that data can be kept and recorded, but qualitative comments in reviews can be insightful in areas that can be missed by data. Panel asked that the Mayor’s office double down on PDR completion assurance.

5.10 The Deputy Mayor agreed that this would be a focus and said that whilst she was confident in the Force’s willingness to maintain timely PDR completion, there have been major technical issues with the new system, which have been extremely difficult to solve and a need for further training in how to effectively use the new system. The Chief Constable concurred that the system was not working as it should, and that every effort was being made to recover from the technical problems it had caused.

5.11 Panel raised concerns around the impact on officers and supervisors to provide the level of service expected of them if system issues are not resolved quickly. The Deputy Mayor shared that she was meeting the new Chief Officer lead on this issues, and they would be discussing risk management. Panel were concerned that officers were not receiving the necessary training to protect themselves from getting into situations which could become widely publicised through social media, such as a recent incident at Manchester Airport.

5.12 Addressing the issue of high workloads, the Deputy Mayor highlighted that the exceptional level of crime recording was feeding this. She acknowledged that the mental health of officers had been a concern of the Inspectorate, and that she was in regular contact with WYP about resources in place to support officers needing help. She assured Panel that she would be using her past experience in mental health to work with the Chief Officer team to create mental health pathways.

5.13 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor to share her views around issues with investigating crime, particularly if she felt that newly recruited detectives do not understand the full scope of the work involved. The Deputy Mayor told Panel that there is a national crisis in detective recruitment. She was confident in the Force’s ability to tackle high harm and complex investigations well; the sheer volume of high level, low harm crime however, has been a struggle to manage. The inexperience of an influx of new officers and consequently supervisors has been a real challenge. The Force are aware and putting measures in place where possible to address these issues, however investigations on less serious crime have tended to suffer as resources have had to focused on serious crime and safeguarding.

5.14 The Mayor added that she is also putting interventions into place to address underlying issues and stop these crimes happening, such as with her Safer Communities Fund and we should recognise that some crime types have indeed already reduced.

5.15 Panel asked for assurances that the Mayor is confident that the training and selection of new officers is robust, and that officers feel confident that they will be backed up by senior officers if necessary. The Mayor replied that she was confident in the processes that WYP had put in place, and that the public would need to rebuild trust in the police over time. She referenced the responsibility of those working in the sector to explain nuances and avoid inflammatory social media and news headlines.

5.16 The Chief Constable assured Panel that the Force was in a better position now with their investigations. He highlighted that officer workloads are high because they are trying to investigate the high numbers of cases, and that his constant dilemma is whether to put officers in training rooms or onto investigations.

5.17 The Mayor concluded by reminding Panel that WYP is just one part of the criminal justice system, and that they cannot fix some issues in isolation whilst trying to balance competing pressures on resources. She assured Panel that despite competing priorities and systemic issues, everyone is aware of the major operational and strategic challenges, and she is happy that leadership within the Force has been recognised by HMICFRS as strong.

**5.18 RESOLVED**

**5.18.1** The Deputy Mayor to provide further data on WYP training completion rates.

**6. Performance Monitoring Report Q1**

6.1 The Mayor introduced the Q1 Performance Monitoring Report, which gives an update on the agreed performance measures set out in the Police and Crime Plan. She highlighted continued improvement in outcomes for rape and sexual offences, and domestic abuse crimes. Despite these improvements, the Mayor stressed that domestic abuse is still more prevalent in the North, as detailed in a recent report, Women of the North by Health Equity North, so her focus remains on this issue.

6.2 The Mayor referenced the reporting on cyber-crime, and that officers from the Yorkshire & Humber Regional Organised Crime Unit had recently teaming up with Leeds University to raise awareness about staying safe online.

6.3 The Mayor also highlighted that the rolling 12 month hate crime figure has fallen year on year, and she was pleased to see an increase in Stalking Protection Orders with 14 more than when she came to office in 2021 and 25 more currently going through the process.

6.4 The Mayor additionally drew attention to the reduction in homicide and knife crime, and that the number of people killed or seriously injured on the region’s roads has started to reduce. She indicated that this area has so many additional repercussions across the health system and the economy, an understanding of which will inform the development of the next Police and Crime Plan.

6.5 Panel asked a question at 1.1.2 around the context of a decline in victim satisfaction levels in Bradford. The Deputy Mayor reflected that Bradford often do struggle with this, often influenced by the BME population - any decline is often magnified in this area. She was confident that the district Force are aware of the issues which are around the area of ‘not being kept informed’ and they are addressing them.

6.6 Panel asked if the Deputy Mayor if she thought there may be a link between this and comments made in the PEEL report around different systems being used in different areas. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged that it was possible, but that different districts do pilot different ways of working based on individual need and circumstances and these are evaluated and best practice can then be rolled out.

6.7 A question was asked at 2.4 about whether the Deputy Mayor had any soft intelligence on why call levels had declined. The Deputy Mayor believed that levels were returning to normal after a recent spike. In addition, she believed that more stability in the call centre workforce was leading to less repeat calls.

6.8 Cllr Lloyd asked for thanks to be put on record to the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) in Leeds, who have been very responsive and supportive in setting up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in her ward. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged the work done by NPTs and drew attention to the work of Sergeant Terri Green in the Baildon, Bingley and Bingley Rural NPT who has built up over 5,000 local members in her Neighbourhood Watch scheme. She told Panel that £10,000 worth of funding from the Mayor’s office has been made available for these schemes.

6.9 Panel asked the Mayor to clarify at 3.7, the proportion of officers from ethnic minorities, which looks to have increased more than would have been expected. The Mayor agreed that her office would check and confirm the correct figures.

6.10 Panel asked for clarification on the structure of cyber-crime reporting. The Mayor confirmed that reporting on these crimes is done by Action Fraud, which is funded by top slicing from the police budget. Action Fraud decide what is investigated locally, with most cases going through Action Fraud.

6.11 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor if she could add any context to the dramatic fall in domestic abuse incidents, and if the change in crime reporting could account for all or just part of this. There were also significant discrepancies in the figures quoted across the report and it was again agreed to confirm these figures. The Deputy Mayor replied that domestic abuse figures are influenced by many factors, and a better indication of progress within this area is to look at repeat offences. The Mayor is focused on prevention of repeat offences through programmes such as Cautioning and Relationship Abuse (CARA).

6.12 A further question was asked around the increase in average days from police referring a case to the CPS and the CPS authorising a charge. The Deputy Mayor was asked if she could provide any context around this. The Deputy Mayor replied that these figures were a part of wider Criminal Justice Board (CJB) measures. She acknowledged that there was a need to look for a useful measure that highlights what is in control of the Force. Panel asked if she could provide assurance that elements within the Force’s control are being addressed. She assured Panel that in her role as Chair of the local CJB, she would do this, and asked Panel to note that compared to the national picture, many of our local processes are working well.

6.13 The Chief Constable reminded Panel of the procedural frustrations with the CPS around remanding and being able to charge suspects, which result in officers having to release suspects without charge. The Deputy Mayor shared details of a Charging pilot scheme in WYP which may solve these frustrations, and which consists of the use of emergency legislation to charge early and before any decision is received from the CPS. This has resulted in many suspects entering an early guilty plea, which is the most positive outcome for victims. The pilot has met with positive feedback so far from the Home Secretary and will be rolled out further.

**6.14 RESOLVED**

**6.14.1** The Mayor’s office to check the figures relating to current numbers of officers from ethnic minority backgrounds, along with the data provided on DA incidents and repeat victims.

**7. Policing Landscape**

7.1 The Mayor introduced her report which details themes and structures which will affect the next Police and Crime Plan. The report details the current thinking and direction of travel, taking in cross cutting themes, and her manifesto focus on serious violence. The report acknowledges the changing landscape for new plan, and how it will be responsive to national trends and public priorities.

7.2 The Mayor asked Panel members to share the Police and Crime Plan consultation survey as widely as possible to ensure maximum representation of views.

**7.3 RESOLVED**

**7.3.1** Panel noted the report.

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

8.1 The Mayor shared her positive experience of the recent Vision Zero launch in Bradford, which had been well received.

8.2 The Mayor updated the Panel on the SDS40 early prison release scheme, which had started in October 2023 and had two more tranches scheduled for Autumn 2024 – 10 September and 22 October. Her office were working where they could with local councils and criminal justice partners to ensure where possible that appropriate support plans were in place for released prisoners. The Mayor assured Panel that the scheme does not include high risk prisoners.

8.3 A question was asked regarding the early release scheme, around what help had been put in place for councils, police and the health service for example, to manage the impact of the releases on services. The Mayor could not give a guarantee that additional pressures would not be felt, but she shared figures which showed that 25% less released prisoners were being re-arrested under the current iteration of the scheme than were previously as the probation service had been given a longer period to prepare for the releases this time. She acknowledged the flaws in the release system and that there was a need to rethink the process and invest in these schemes at a national and local level. She was hopeful that the appointment of Lord Timpson into a government role in this area would bring some traction to the change process.

8.4 The Mayor updated the Panel on the regional response to recent national unrest and the separate incidents of unrest in Harehills, Leeds. A Community Outcomes Meeting in November is planned to enable specific discussions and questions around security and community cohesion in Harehills and the Mayor encouraged Panel members to watch if they could. The Chief Constable gave an in depth analysis of the situation and appraised the Panel of arrests and ongoing investigations. He paid tribute to the police officers, council staff, partner organisations, and community leaders involved in diffusing the situation.

8.5 The Mayor updated Panel on a recent Crime and Justice round table, facilitated by the Times Crime and Justice Commission, which she attended with other Mayors. The Commission aims to address issues such as knife crime, shoplifting, cybercrime, police culture, court backlogs, legal aid, and prison overcrowding, with a final report to be published in April next year. The Mayor reported that the discussion focused on changes to the criminal justice system, rehabilitation, support for offenders, early intervention for young people, and the support for swift justice for those causing the recent national unrest. She told Panel that she had challenged the Commission to learn from the innovative processes which enabled this to help address violence against women and girls.

8.6 The Mayor updated Panel on the latest round of the Safer Communities Fund, which has a budget of £1m this time. She asked Panel members to talk to community groups in their networks and wards, and encourage them to apply.

**9. Published Key Decisions**

9.1 The Published Key Decisions were noted.

**10. Agreed Actions Log**

10.1 In the light of discussions at Item 5, Panel asked the Deputy Mayor to update them as soon as possible on the action from 12 April, as follows: “An update on the implementation of the new PDR system within WYP to be added to the forward agenda plan for autumn 2024” and for this update to include completion rates.

**11. Forward Plan**

11.1 Two changes had been made to the Forward Plan at the request of the Mayor’s office; that the Annual Report be brought to the November meeting instead of December, and that the draft Police and Crime Plan would be brought to the December meeting instead of November, due to an extension of the consultation date.

**12. Complaints received by the Panel**

12.1 The Chair of the Complaints Sub-Committee updated Panel on a new complaint against the Deputy Mayor which will be heard by the Complaints Sub-Committee within the next few weeks. The Sub-Committee’s decision will be reported to the next available Panel meeting.

12.2 Panel had received one new complaint about the Mayor, which had been forwarded to the Monitoring Officer at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority in line with relevant procedures.

**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 9.30am on Friday, 8th November 2024 in the Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield.