**Item 2**



**West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel**

**Draft Minutes**

**1st March 2024, Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield**

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

Councillor Neil Buckley - Leeds Council

Councillor Nicole Sharpe - Leeds Council

Councillor Paul Sullivan - Bradford Council

Councillor Chris Hayden - Bradford Council

Councillor Ann Kingstone - Calderdale Council

Councillor Robert Thornber - Calderdale Council

Councillor Anthony Smith - Kirklees Council

Councillor Gwen Lowe - Kirklees Council

Councillor Susan Lee-Richards - Kirklees Council

Councillor Jackie Ferguson - Wakefield Council

Mrs Joanne Sykes - Independent

Mr Trevor Lake - Independent

In attendance

Alison Lowe - Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

Julie Reid - West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Wendy Stevens - West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Liz Hunter - West Yorkshire Combined Authority

John Robins - West Yorkshire Police

Daniel Ware - West Yorkshire Police

Sharon Fraser - Wakefield Council

Samantha Wilkinson - Wakefield Council

Fiona Bernardo - Wakefield Council

**1. Acceptance of apologies for absence**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Usman Ali and Hassan Khan.

**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 2nd February 2024.**

2.1. The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

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

3.1 The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items to add to the agenda.

**4. Members’ Declaration of Interests**

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

**5. Performance Monitoring Report – Q3**

5.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced the Q3 performance monitoring report, which covers the 12 months to December 2023. She highlighted that satisfaction scores had slightly improved and that total contacts into West Yorkshire Police had increased by 73,000 over this period. She pointed out the reduction in recorded domestic abuse, which is down by 5.8%, and shared her belief that the increase in Stalking Prevention Orders will help to address this issue further. The Deputy Mayor also drew Panel’s attention to the fact that there is now a full year’s data of ASB crime figures as recorded under the new parameters, which makes the data now comparable year on year.

5.2 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor to clarify domestic abuse figures at 1.3.6 in the report, which show a rise in the outcome rate of 0.7%, alongside a fall in the number of actual positive outcomes. The Deputy Mayor replied that the fall in positive outcomes was the result of a fall in actual numbers of domestic abuse crimes which has caused the actual numbers of possible positive outcomes to fall too. Panel members felt that it would be useful to see the figures against population numbers to give a better context and comparison, and this was accepted by the Deputy Mayor, who committed to providing this breakdown within the next report.

5.3 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor to share her knowledge around the decrease in effective trial rates, and what it means for West Yorkshire. She explained that when a trial doesn’t happen (for a number of reasons, for example, a witness withdraws evidence), it is then called an ‘ineffective trial’ and has to go back into the system. Covid exacerbated existing issues with this, and partners within the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) which is chaired by the Deputy Mayor are working together to explore possible solutions to the delays.

5.4 The Deputy Mayor was asked to give further context around the knife crime figures. She explained that the statistics are taken from knife crime recordings in different areas, which can be recorded in different ways. The national data centre has looked at consistency in recording knife crime across Forces with a view to improving this. She clarified that West Yorkshire has seen a small increase in this indicator because of a new recording system, but that this should now stabilise, and she advised that her Office could look at trends for the next report.

5.5 A question was asked around victim satisfaction, and if the Deputy Mayor had any intelligence around why the figures for Leeds had dropped by 4%. She replied that she wasn’t aware of any specific issues in Leeds, and nothing had been flagged through any feedback from contacts in victim support services or WYP. The Deputy Mayor suspected that a recent piece of dedicated, proactive work in Calderdale and Bradford to increase victim satisfaction rates, especially amongst BAME groups may make figures in Leeds seem out of kilter, but she assured Panel that she would continue to monitor the figures and listen to feedback.

5.6 Clarification was sought around the definition and figures for Assault with a Sharp Instrument and Panel heard that hospital admissions are used as a surrogate indicator here. An explanatory note has been written and will be added to the glossary of terms.

5.7 The Deputy Mayor was asked to clarify and confirm the numbers of police officers recruited in 2023, as per page 17 of the report. Specifically, Panel asked for reassurance around numbers of extra officers that had been recruited under the Mayor’s 2021 pledge, separate to normal recruitment and PUP recruitment, and for figures to take into account attrition rates to enable an accurate view on the success of the Mayoral pledge. The Deputy Mayor assured Panel that definitive numbers will be available by the end of March, and that these would be based on actual officers and staff recruited. Both the Deputy Mayor and the Chief Constable acknowledged that numbers are difficult to isolate due to different programmes and the classification of a ‘frontline officer’ which complicated figures, but that they were confident that all targets will be met and committed to bringing clarified YOY figures back to Panel. Panel were keen that numbers recruited from ethnic minorities should be clearly visible within figures where possible.

5.8 A question was asked about the drop in domestic abuse figures, and whether changes in crime recording rules introduced by the Home Office in June 2023 might have impacted this. If so, the Deputy Mayor was asked to give assurance that this would not affect the priority given to tackling domestic abuse. Additionally, Panel questioned if the higher rates of abandoned 101 calls could have influenced a reduction in reported domestic abuse crime – although it was acknowledged that there was no way of quantifying this. The Deputy Mayor’s view was that it was unlikely that higher numbers of abandoned calls would have a significant impact on domestic abuse figures, as these cases are usually ongoing and often come through to 999. She also highlighted that the average waiting time for 101 calls is improving, and now stands at two minutes. The Chief Constable added that WYP believe that calls to 101 are often abandoned after hearing the recorded message giving callers other options of where to find infor4mation or the online chat function, which can then become a preferred option for callers.

5.9 Both the Deputy Mayor and the Chief Constable reassured Panel that despite changes to the crime recording rules and any impact that they may have on domestic abuse figures, this area of crime will never be a low priority because it currently accounts for approximately 20% of reported crime and is classified as a ‘high harm’ crime. The Chief Constable assured Panel that he would be monitoring any changes to reported crime which may be affected by the rule changes, however, he believed that if any crime types were to drop in this area as a result, it would probably be harassment or malicious communications as secondary offences, with assault being counted as the primary crime.

5.10 Panel welcomed the increase in numbers of officers from ethnic minority background, and asked the Deputy Mayor if the ambition of WYP was ultimately to reflect the population demographics of West Yorkshire. She agreed that it was, based on the principle that the police should be the public and the public should be the police. She stressed the need to continue to further engage and encourage minority groups to apply to the Force, and that her office, together with WYP are committed to furthering trust and confidence within these communities as part of the recruitment process.

5.11 Discussion took place around the difficulty of tackling public perception of crime, which members find is often much worse than the figures show it to be. Panel asked the Deputy Mayor about work she is doing to help the public understand the figures, and to manage perception issues. She responded that she makes as much time as possible to meet with the public and community groups and always tries to explain figures as well as listening to concerns, giving reassurance where she can. The Mayor’s office also deals with members of the public with a large quantity of casework, resolving issues and understanding public perceptions.

5.12 A question was asked about the Deputy Mayor’s confidence in the ongoing work with WYP and partners to reduce knife crime. The Deputy Mayor replied that she was confident that the police and their criminal justice partners are doing a lot of excellent work in this area, but that there is always more that should and must be done. She made reference to innovative ways used by the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) to tackle knife crime, and their continued pursuit of different approaches. She reiterated the responsibility of the public as a whole to address the issue alongside the police - at home, at school and with peers and friends.

5.13 The Deputy Mayor was asked to share her thoughts around the police pursuing investigations without victims consent as a way to prevent further crime being perpetrated. She replied that her experience talking to women’s groups about this is that it is not supported, and the preferred way to make a decision to prosecute a case would be a victim led approach. The Chief Constable added that the Force would on occasion prosecute without a victim’s consent, but decisions are on a case by case basis, in appropriate circumstances, and with the need to ensure the victim’s safety as a priority consideration.

5.14 Panel wished to record their congratulations to WYP on two specific issues – firstly, for the high numbers of cases accepted by the CPS for prosecution, and secondly, for their diligence in tackling pet theft.

**5.15 RESOLVED**

**5.15.1** **WYP to provide clarification on the numbers of frontline officers and staff who have been recruited since 2021, including a breakdown by ethnic minority groups where possible.**

**6. Rural Crime**

6.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, which outlines the work of West Yorkshire Police in tackling rural crime.

6.2 Discussion took place around the issues raised in the report, and how they applied to parts of urban areas in addition to rural places. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged this and highlighted the application of the Safer Streets funding pot, amongst others, which has been used to address these issues. She highlighted recent examples of the use of smart water in Leeds which has helped to cut rural crime and crime in similar neighbourhoods within urban boundaries.

**6.3 RESOLVED**

**6.3.1** Panel noted the report.

**7. Drugs and Substance Misuse Update**

7.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report which lists the latest statistics around drug crime and major operational campaigns and strategies within WYP. She highlighted work around drug testing, in particular the Mayor’s Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) which supports the dedicated testing of those arrested for offences likely to be linked to Class A substance misuse, with the aim of referring positive tests into treatment rather than into the criminal justice system.

7.2 The Deputy Mayor was asked for her thoughts around the perceived strategy of WYP to target senior players in the drugs market, at the expense of low level street dealers. She responded that leads at any level are followed up, but prosecutions will depend on evidence and the treatment records of perpetrators.

7.3 Discussion took place around the recent agreement within the Chief Officer Team at WYP to pilot voluntary carriage of Naloxone. The Chief Constable stated that this would continue as long as funding was available.

7.4 The Deputy Mayor wished to record her thanks to the Directors of Public Health in Leeds and Wakefield and partners of the Harm to Hope programme. Along with Project Adder funding, partners are trying to bring together a coherent strategy to ensure that people affected by alcohol and substance misuse get the treatment they need.

7.5 Panel expressed thanks to the Mayor’s Office for the well written and informative paper, which would assist them in dispersing public perceptions born out of media coverage.

7.6 Panel members raised concerns that 26% arrests are related to drug and substance misuse, and the huge impact this has on resources and custody suites. The Deputy Mayor was asked how she thought the trendline would progress in this area, and how it would be resourced. She responded that the issue is a societal one needing all partners to work together, and she agreed that the impact on custody resource is significant. She drew Panels attention to the role of Independent Custody Visitors who are very active and regularly report back to the Mayor on their experiences of custody suites, providing a way that pressures can be monitored.

7.7 Discussion took place around the use of force in custody settings following the HMICFRS West Yorkshire joint inspection of police custody. The Chief Constable provided contextual background on the use of force in custody settings and community settings, and Panel requested a breakdown of recorded incidents in those two settings to enable them to take a view on any disproportionality.

7.8 Further discussion took place around cannabis farms in the region, and the influence of foreign groups in their operation. Concern was expressed around the exploitation of foreign nationals and property owners, and the Deputy Mayor confirmed that there were modern slavery issues around this, further noting that the vast majority of modern slavery issues develop within the UK itself around county lines and cuckooing. She continues to progress work with the West Yorkshire Anti-Slavery Partnership to understand the issues involved and bring partners together to develop strategies to tackle this specific form of exploitation.

7.9 Panel asked for clarification around figures showing drug treatment referrals, with initial assessment figures seeming to contradict those contained in the performance report. The Deputy Mayor confirmed that data contained in this paper relates to data collection over a trial period and shows only discrete local statistics, whereas figures in the performance paper are from the National Drugs Treatment monitoring system.

7.10 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor for a report on the outcomes of a recent trial in Calderdale to look at trigger offences. It was noted that the Deputy Mayor would be writing to Government seeking the inclusion of Domestic Abuse as a trigger offence and if West Yorkshire could pilot this work.

7.11 A question was asked around the linking of data between forces to tackle county lines gangs. Reassurance was given that West Yorkshire is well linked on this work with neighbouring forces such as Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire. The Chief Constable gave further assurance around how the Force works on a regular and ongoing basis with specialist regional and national Forces and agencies, and that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor regularly receive reports to show that this is happening.

**7.12 RESOLVED**

**7.12.1** A breakdown of recorded incidents on the use of force in custody and community settings to be provided by West Yorkshire Police.

**8. West Yorkshire Safety of Women and Girls Update**

8.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, which updates on the work being done to deliver the Mayor’s Women and Girls Strategy. She observed that this area of work is more difficult to measure than others with much being about creating behaviour change, however she highlighted specific examples of ongoing work and the establishment of the Mayor’s new Women and Girls Safety Unit as a recent success.

8.2 Discussion took place around how work in this area could be measured, such as through relatable crime performance measures, social media statistics and shares of videos and posts, and the number of schools that have engaged with the Pol-Ed programme. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged that it’s very difficult to measure statistics around, for example, misogyny, but she hoped that the actions being taken now will prevent future crime and distress in this area through gradual societal change. A whole systems approach is employed including work in prisons and within other criminal justice partners.

8.3 A question was asked around female genital mutilation, and what else the Deputy Mayor thought could be done to identify and address this area of crime. She responded with her belief that due to the nature of the crime, it is difficult to identify true numbers of victims, often due to shame and cultural barriers. She assured Panel of the ongoing activity to continue to train partners in the medical community to identify cases and assist in getting help and justice for victims.

8.4 Panel asked for further information about how the new Women and Girls Safety Unit will operate, and how it will add value. The Deputy Mayor was unable to give further detail as the exact structure had not yet been decided, however she hoped that it would operate similarly to the stalking co-ordination unit, with a focus on risk assessments. Recruitment within WYP for the Unit has taken place, and further details will be shared as soon as they are available.

8.5 The Deputy Mayor was asked to share information on the existence of specific projects around trans issues and safety. She assured Panel that the Mayor’s Office commission services to support all victims of crime, including the trans community, and victim support includes specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs).

8.6 Discussion took place around work with the Community Interest Company, Lime Culture, around the issues faced by men and boys, particularly rape and domestic abuse. The work has generated a series of recommendations for all agencies to improve service provision and support space for men and boys. If the Mayor is re-elected in May, then the next iteration of the Police and Crime Plan will include a commitment to this work.

8.7 The Deputy Mayor highlighted how she believes that the work of the Mayor and herself in this area has improved trust locally around West Yorkshire, and this has been specifically mentioned by residents.

8.8 The Deputy Mayor was asked why domestic violence, as the biggest threat to women and girls, is not mentioned in the report. She replied that the report focuses on additional work being undertaken under the Women and Girls agenda. She assured Panel that a significant piece of work is being undertaken around domestic abuse by Professor Jane Monckton Smith, showing how it often leads to more serious crimes such as homicide. She also highlighted work which has been undertaken to show that much stalking is as a result of domestic abuse, and that the Stalking Prevention Unit was set up to address this. In addition, she reminded Panel that over 60% of the awards from the Mayors Safer Communities Fund have gone to projects which help tackle violence against women and girls.

**8.9 RESOLVED**

**8.9.1** The Mayor’s Office to share the completed victims and witnesses strategy when it is published in April.

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

9.1 The Deputy Mayor shared the latest news on the Mayor’s Safer Communities Fund round, with 68 projects benefitting from £1m of proceeds of crime money, making it the biggest grant pot ever. The increase had enabled the Mayor to be able to offer higher grants of up to £20,000.

9.2 Holly Lynch MP had recently invited the Vision Zero Board to speak about their work in the House of Commons, and the Deputy Mayor shared subsequent work on a communications plan for MPs to help get their road safety messages out and look at opportunities for change to the law to support the initiative, where possible.

9.3 The Deputy Mayor shared her experience of the first ever Youth Conference in West Yorkshire, with workshops on knives, violence against women and girls and other subjects.

9.4 WYP are currently undergoing a PEEL inspection, the results of which will be made public in May. The Chief Constable had observed a recalibration of the way that Forces are assessed, with the focus more on outcomes. The Chief Constable commented that comparisons on PEEL should be made against other Forces rather than just previous PEEL inspection gradings.

9.5 The Deputy Mayor updated Panel on West Yorkshire Police’s response to recent high profile cases in the national media and gave assurances on lessons learnt, including looking back at risk assessments, previous investigations and interactions with partner agencies, and capacity and caseload issues. She shared actions taken by WYP in the light of these cases, including a training course for all first line managers responsible for supervising new recruits. She further reassured Panel that it is both her and the Mayor’s responsibility to hold WYP to account over consistency for victims, and that they would continue to do so.

**10. Published Key Decisions**

10.1 The Published Key Decisions were noted.

**11. Agreed Actions Log**

11.1 The Agreed Actions log was noted.

**12. Forward Agenda Plan**

12.1 The Forward Agenda Plan was noted.

12.2 The Deputy Mayor is still liaising with West Yorkshire Police on a written response to the Casey inquiry, and this would be brought to the next meeting, if not circulated beforehand.

**13. Complaints Received by the Panel**

13.1 Panel noted that there are no new recorded complaints to report against the Mayor or Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

**14. Any Other Business**

14.1 There was no other business.

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

15.1 The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be held at 10.00am on Friday, 12th April 2024 in the Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield.