



West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

Draft Minutes

16th July 2021, Council Chambers, County Hall, Wakefield

PRESENT:	Councillor Jacqueline Williams	- Wakefield Council (Vice-Chair)
	Councillor Paul Sullivan	- Bradford Council
	Councillor Tariq Hussain	- Bradford Council
	Councillor Sophie Whittaker	- Calderdale Council
	Councillor Sarah Courtney	- Calderdale Council
	Councillor Cahal Burke	- Kirklees Council
	Councillor Amanda Carter	- Leeds City Council
	Councillor Nicole Sharpe	- Leeds City Council
	Mr Roger Grasby	- Independent Panel Member

In attendance

Tracy Brabin	- Mayor of West Yorkshire
Alison Lowe	- Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime
Erica Doran	- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Wendy Stevens	- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
John Robins QPM	- Chief Constable, West Yorkshire Police
Sharon Fraser	- Wakefield Council
Samantha Wilkinson	- Wakefield Council
Fiona Bernardo	- Wakefield Council
Alan Reiss	- West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mohammed Iqbal, Richard Dunbar, Mark Thompson, Masood Ahmed, Maureen Tennant-King and Mrs Jo Sykes. Cllr Jacqueline Williams deputised as Chair in Cllr Iqbal's absence.
- 1.2 It was reported that since the last meeting, two former Panel members, Cllrs Mohammad Naeem and Steve Sweeney had sadly passed away. Panel agreed to send condolences to the families.

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 18th June 2021.

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

3.1 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 made.

5. Delivery Quarterly Cover Paper.

5.1 The Mayor introduced the Delivery Quarterly (DQ) figures for Q4 2020/21, acknowledging a slight delay due to devolution processes. The figures presented cover the quarter immediately prior to devolution, hence they are branded as Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPPC). Going forward, DQ reports will reflect the new Mayoral branding. The Mayor drew Panel's attention to the fact that the report is based on the previous Police and Crime Plan, although themes discussed in the report will feed into the new Plan.

5.2 It was acknowledged that there were many positives in the report, but also opportunities to improve. Positive highlights included a reduction in the number of re-offenders, a measure of the effectiveness of systems and support to keep young people out of the criminal justice system after first offences. Panel heard that for the first time since March 2012, there has been a reduction in these numbers.

5.3 The Mayor drew Panel's attention to the disappointing drop in the Your Views survey scores. The Mayor highlighted that she had previously raised concerns about outreach and consultation with communities, and she felt that it was important for the police to hear feedback from these groups.

5.4 Panel heard that the move to an online survey had attracted more negative comments, and the reasons for this were unclear. The Mayor believed that it could be partly due to frustration with Covid restrictions and laws. Panel heard how the Mayor is intending to address the reasons for this drop in confidence with a series of 'Tell Tracy' roadshows, alongside her Inclusivity Champion. Panel heard how the aim of these roadshows will be to reach into communities that have felt ignored, and to start to re-build trust.

5.5 The Mayor highlighted improvements in the Serious Violent Crime category, which has seen a reduction across almost all categories.

5.6 The Mayor invited questions from the Panel on the Delivery Quarterly report.

5.7 A question was asked in relation to the figures on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). Inspection reports always highlight this as an area of concern. Members of the Panel shared issues with regard to reporting ASB; these issues centred around the number of different channels through which ASB is reported, and the subsequent lack of

combined data regarding perpetrators. This has meant that ASB cases can continue for years, with no obvious resolution apparent and not enough data to enable charges to be pressed.

- 5.8 The Mayor agreed with the sentiments and that ASB is a continuing issue. The Chief Constable noted that ASB has been discussed many times at Panel meetings and the issue is that not all ASB is a crime and therefore much is outside the jurisdiction of the police. Much ASB is reportable to other agencies, including the local authorities. He acknowledged the frustration in pooling intelligence to build cases, and expressed his desire for the maintenance of joint ASB teams to make best use of available resources. Panel heard that best practice would always be considered by the police force, and that they will continue to direct demand for action into the right organisation to ensure the correct response. He stressed that although the police are not always the statutory agency in these cases, they would always want to be informed and be part of the solution if possible. The Chief Constable highlighted, at this juncture, that West Yorkshire Police (WYP) has been graded outstanding for its recording of crime, one of only four forces in the country to achieve this standard. Panel was told that joint information sharing protocols have existed for many years to address ASB, and have laid the foundation for agencies such as housing, police and local authorities to come together in order to share data and piece together cases, however these operations have been subject to issues of resource and funding. The Chief Constable stressed the need for the capacity and capability to respond effectively in these cases.
- 5.10 A question was asked regarding the safeguarding of women and girls, and also men and boys. With regard to domestic violence incidents, after the initial incident is recorded, cases are referred to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). A concern was raised that investigations then become difficult to follow, and to monitor how well affected children are being cared for. Leeds City Council are currently undergoing a pre-OFSTED inspection in Children's Services, and the Mayor was asked if the police were involved in this pre-inspection consultation. The Mayor replied that this was a very specific case, and that she would look into it. She stressed her commitment to embedding early intervention strategies in the new Police and Crime Plan (PCP) to try to address these issues.
- 5.11 The recent HMIC report detailing how less than 4% of rape cases end in conviction due to failures in partnership working between agencies involved, was referenced by a Panel member. The Mayor was asked about the figures in the report concerning rape, and if she could clarify the phrase "positive outcomes" and how well that reflects cases, from the perspective of victims. The Mayor clarified that her understanding of a positive outcome was a successful prosecution undertaken in a timely manner, enabling victims to start the process of recovery.
- 5.12 The Chief Constable welcomed the report, in particular its focus on solutions rather than blame, and fully supported the call for a whole systems approach. He described his view of a 'positive outcome' as the bringing of criminal charges. WYP now have a charge rate which is higher than any force other than the Metropolitan Police. The conviction rate is the responsibility of the criminal justice system, but positive increases have been seen over the last two years, with a rise of over 10% from the previous 60%. WYP are charging twice as many people as last year. The Mayor

- assured Panel of her belief that if a victim has enough strength to go to the police to report a rape, then it's extremely important that they are able to access support, and have a sense that they are believed and that they will get justice.
- 5.13 A question was asked to the Mayor about Crown Court delays, and of her plans to address the backlog, amidst reports of some cases now being listed for 2022. The Mayor replied that she hoped that the pace of dealing with the backlog could be accelerated, now restrictions were being lifted further.
- 5.14 Panel questioned the Mayor, and in turn the Chief Constable, on strategies to deal with on street drug dealing and street crime. The Chief Constable shared his concern that the satisfaction of survey respondents with how the police and partners tackle this issue is lower than in previous surveys, and stressed that it was again, a multi-agency partnership resource issue. Panel heard how neighbourhood policing can address the issue of dealers on the streets, but that a district based approach must be taken in these cases, with the police collaborating across boundaries with the aim of taking profit out of serious organised crime. WYP have a good relationship with the National Crime Agency, and apply a policing and intelligence response to the issue. He believed that the issue is societal, and needs a concurrent health based approach. Class A drug use is lower than in previous times, however the influx and popularity of other recreational drugs is problematic. The Chief Constable assured the Panel that the police understand the destructive link to communities and to ASB.
- 5.15 Panel made reference to the safeguarding review, and were pleased to see that good progress continued to be made in this area, but stressed the importance of making sure that this trajectory continues. A question was asked regarding the recording of hate crime, specifically if data would be split into categories, and how the data would be used. The Mayor responded that it was very important to understand the landscape of hate crime, and that she had raised the subject with the Chief Constable recently. The Chief Constable added that response to this work is ongoing in conjunction with partners. Work has been done to encourage confidence in reporting these crimes, and as a result figures may increase. He stressed the need for a cross-societal approach. The Mayor expressed concerns that Covid-19 had caused an increase in hate crime against people of Chinese and South Asian heritage, and that data will help to evidence this and drive implementation of work to address the issue. She stated her belief that social cohesion comes from understanding and education, and that this needed to be rebuilt.
- 5.16 A question was asked regarding the impact of vehicle crime, for example speeding and driving without insurance, on community safety. Panel heard of a scheme in Calderdale, which has been funded annually (Operation Hornbill) to address this, and the area is keen to achieve greater longevity of funds in order to pursue a more strategic approach. The Mayor said that she understood the problem of short term funding schemes and the frustrations felt when programmes were set up and established just as money runs out. She said that she had raised this recently with the relevant Minister. The Chief Constable concurred that the jointly funded Operation Hornbill was working well, and he hoped that it would continue in the future.

5.17 A question was asked regarding the reduction in the number of child sexual offences recorded, specifically what impact the Mayor thought school closures, and the subsequent lack of contact children had with professionals over this period, might have had on this decrease. The Mayor agreed that this was a concern. She assured the Panel that she had spoken to Children’s Services and had discussed how they had dealt with this issue. Innovative methods were being used by schools and professionals to monitor families and children, for example, calling unannounced, and regularly delivering work to homes. The Chief Constable added that this indicator covered wide variety of crime, including grooming, and child sexual exploitation. He believed that the drop in reported cases could be due, in part, to a lack of assessment opportunity because of school closures during Covid, but he was also confident that it was also due to positive action through prevention campaigns and programmes. WYP work with Children’s Services and other agencies, and follow a specific targeted approach towards the most vulnerable, and he believed that the increasing focus on digital forensic investment would help in the future. The Chief Constable put forward the need for a long term, health based, societal approach to work in conjunction with technological progress and assured the Panel that this was not an area that would be subject to funding cuts. The Mayor added that she has discussed the issue of Missing Persons with the Chief Constable, and has challenged him on the area of repeat Missing Persons, as she believed that these people were increasingly susceptible to harm or grooming.

5.18 A question was asked about how the public were signposted to the online Your Views survey. Panel heard that the next survey was being prepared, and a trial had been completed. As soon as the survey is available, Panel would be informed of the signposting process.

5.19 The Mayor was asked to clarify who the author of Panel reports will be in future, specifically, if it would be herself, or the Deputy Mayor. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor agreed that reports would be written jointly, and the pronoun “we” would be used.

5.20 The Mayor was asked if she had had any thoughts on how she might hold the Chief Constable to account in her tenure of office, specifically whether she thought that the current arrangements were satisfactory, and what changes she might like to make. The Mayor told the Panel that she intended to undertake one full round of the current processes, and make any decisions about changes after that had been completed. Panel heard that the Mayor had already identified some opportunities for changes, and that she wanted any change to contribute to her ambition to make WYP as open and transparent as possible.

5.21 RESOLVED

5.21.1 Panel noted the report, welcomed the progress documented and the plans in place to address the issues raised.

6. Developing the Police and Crime Plan

- 6.1 Panel were updated by the Mayor with regard to progress on the next Police and Crime Plan.
- 6.2 Panel heard that the Mayor is working with the DMPC on a shared vision for the Plan, and setting the strategic direction of travel together. Early themes for the Plan include: building public confidence, early interventions, creating safer communities and focusing on victims. The Mayor referenced her two manifesto commitments of increasing the number of police officers and staff, and keeping women and girls safe and assured Panel that they would be embedded in the new Plan.
- 6.3 The Panel also heard that consultation on the Plan is underway with stakeholders, and that the Plan will need to incorporate the strategic policing requirements set by the Home Office. The Mayor felt that she was in a unique position to be able to combine her influence over housing, transport, skills and the environment with her policing responsibilities; this would build on schemes already in place to create new innovative, ambitious and fresh strategies. Panel were assured that they would be updated on progress of the Plan at every meeting, with a final draft planned for December 2021.
- 6.4 Questions were asked regarding mapping areas of concern, and identifying funding gaps. The Mayor confirmed that her team were working on a needs assessment with partners across West Yorkshire and were using a wealth of data to explore the challenges in policing. She stressed that these had to be addressed using a whole systems approach and include public health and early intervention services. The Mayor added that she was working on a consultation and engagement plan for 'hard to reach' areas, where there has traditionally been less confidence in the police.
- 6.5 A question was asked about the Mayor's manifesto commitment regarding keeping women and girls safe, specifically what was also in place to protect men and boys. The Mayor responded that the majority of sexual violence is committed by men – against men and boys as well and women and girls – so a big focus for her was on early intervention and using sports programmes, for example but that this was not to the detriment of protecting men and boys. The safety of women and girls was prioritised because this had historically been a 'hard to deal' issue. The DMPC added that there are services for men and boys, including a specialist Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) which is funded through the Mayor's office.
- 6.6 A question was asked about the West Yorkshire Casualty Partnership. Panel have consistently asked about thresholds for installing speed cameras, and have expressed a desire to access decision makers. The Mayor agreed to look into this, acknowledging the widespread perception that communities have to wait for a casualty on a road before action is taken to install speed controls. The DMPC added that she has made contact with relevant people and has asked for a meeting as soon as possible. Her desire was to create leadership on this issue and link it into Mayoral plans.
- 6.7 The issue of partnership working to address drug-related crime was raised, with reference to the recent report (published 8th July 2021) by Dame Carol Black. The report referenced the ongoing debate around a criminal justice versus health approach

to tackling the use of illegal drugs. Panel asked if the Mayor's plan would address the panoply of support services needed to interlink with the police, such as mental health provision and the probation service, some of which have seen funding cuts of around 50%. The Mayor responded that although healthcare was not included in her powers in the devolution deal, she is able and willing to talk to these services, and to persuade them to work together to tackle these issues. She added that the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) adopts a public health approach, which she considers to be working well and this could hopefully provide a template for other areas. The DMPC added that the VRU has a secondee from the Integrated Care System (ICS) and this enables informed practice in communities. Panel also heard that additionally, mental health provision for police officers is being addressed, and national funding programmes are being examined.

6.8 The Mayor and DMPC were asked to confirm their plans for additional police officers and staff, and of the planned proportions for each of those two areas. The Mayor confirmed that she was still developing recruitment plans, but affirmed her commitment to the manifesto promise to recruit 750 more police officers and staff, using a baseline of November 2020 numbers.

6.9 A question was asked regarding support for police officers who have witnessed significant trauma. The Mayor confirmed that she was looking at existing support structures with the DMPC and the Chief Constable. The Chief Constable added that occupational health support was in place, with specialist services and psychological assessments available to all staff – officers, support staff and call handlers. Police treatment centres, run by charities, also provide support and help.

6.10 RESOLVED

6.10.1 Panel noted the report and noted the Mayor's intention to provide regular updates on the progress of the new Police and Crime Plan.

7. Investigations and Outcomes cover paper and report

7.1 The Mayor introduced the report, and drew Panel's attention to her desire to see that recorded data reaches the point where all positive outcomes are recorded. She also drew attention to the work of the Out of Court scrutiny panel and to the restorative justice report. Panel heard that the Cautions and Relationship Abuse (CARA) programme had 263 bookings over the period of this report, and about the introduction of a Hate Crime awareness course.

7.3 A question was asked regarding Area for Improvement (AFI) 3, as identified by the HMICFRS PEEL 2018/19 inspection report, which focuses on the time taken for WYP to retrieve digital evidence from devices, and return those devices to their owners. Data on this AFI was requested by the Panel, to enable a comparison against other forces, and to see if WYP had made any improvements to this metric. Mention was made of the distress caused to victims of being without mobile devices for extended periods of time, when they particularly need to be in contact with friends and family for support. The Chief Constable replied that £10m had been invested into new equipment and

digital forensic capabilities, and that the time taken to return devices was significantly better than it had been previously. He stressed that these cases were complex, but that there had been a definite improvement in this area, and future figures would show this.

7.4 RESOLVED

7.4.1 Panel noted the report.

8. Published Key Decisions

8.1 Panel noted the published key decisions.

9. Mayor's Response to any current issues

9.1 The Mayor drew Panel's attention to a recent press release from her office, which detailed funding secured until 2023 for 25 new full time sexual and domestic violence advisor roles, and an additional £350,000 of additional funding for domestic abuse services. A bid for Safer Streets funding, to improve the look and feel of public parks has also been submitted, with the outcome expected at the end of August.

9.2 A question was asked regarding what COVID procedures WYP would have in place to protect both themselves and the public, following further relaxation of lockdown restrictions. It was noted that the National Police Chiefs Council had recently issued guidance on this. The Mayor responded that she had no powers to mandate mask wearing within the police force, and that she was very concerned about safety following the increase in case numbers. The Chief Constable assured the Panel that the police would continue to wear masks after the restrictions ended.

9.3 A question was asked regarding contingency plans if large numbers of officers were asked to self-isolate in the coming weeks. The Chief Constable informed Panel that the absence rate currently stood at almost 5%, which is higher than normal. Panel heard that the police force have been given some exemptions with regard to self-isolating, for example, in firearms, and the force has been advised that if contacted by the NHS, individuals can choose whether or not to self-isolate. He was, however, concerned that absence levels would get to a critical stage, compounded by the demand for services which had now returned to pre-pandemic levels.

9.4 RESOLVED

9.4.1 Panel noted the current issues.

10. Agreed Actions Log

10.1 The Agreed Actions Log was noted.

11. Forward Agenda Plan

11.1 The Forward Agenda Plan was noted.

12. Complaints received by the Panel

12.1 The Panel noted that there are no new recorded or existing ongoing complaints.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 There was no other business.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

14.1 The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be held at 10.00am on Friday, 10th September 2021 in the Council Chamber, Wakefield County Hall.