



West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

Draft Minutes

8th September 2023, Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield

PRESENT:	Councillor Eileen Taylor	- Leeds City Council
	Councillor Neil Buckley	- Leeds City Council
	Councillor Nicole Sharpe	- Leeds City Council
	Councillor Hassan Khan	- Bradford Council
	Councillor Paul Sullivan	- Bradford Council
	Councillor Chris Hayden	- Bradford Council
	Councillor Ann Kingstone	- Calderdale Council
	Councillor Robert Thornber	- Calderdale Council
	Councillor Susan Lee-Richards	- Kirklees Council
	Councillor Anthony Smith	- Kirklees Council
	Councillor Usman Ali	- Wakefield 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
Sharon Fraser	- Wakefield Council
Fiona Bernardo	- Wakefield Council

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Naheed Mather.

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 14th July 2023.

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

5. Performance Monitoring – Q1

5.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, which covers the 12 months to June 2023 unless otherwise stated, and contains positive information on satisfaction, especially amongst victims of domestic violence and stalking. The report is drawn from national and local sources including the Mayor's Policing and Crime Team, West Yorkshire Police (WYP), and the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB). She also drew attention to the latest Performance Scrutiny meeting on 29 August, held between the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and WYP Chief Constable John Robins such as the 'DA Matters' training for officers dealing with domestic abuse incidents.

5.2 Panel commended figures which show that the gap between satisfaction amongst white victims and other ethnic groups has reduced from 11% to 6.2% YOY.

5.3 The Deputy Mayor was asked to give her thoughts around the significant differences within the region with regards to satisfaction rates, namely the continued decline in Leeds and Wakefield, and the continued increase in Bradford and Calderdale. She was asked if she was aware of whether the relevant District Commanders were sharing learning on this. The Deputy Mayor shared her thoughts on this issue; she believed that officers Bradford and Calderdale were making great efforts to keep victims informed of the progress of cases, especially amongst ethnic minority groups, and this had had a really positive effect on satisfaction. She assured Panel that she would continue to discuss sharing good practice across District Commanders in future meetings with the Chief Constable.

5.4 The Deputy Mayor was asked to share her understanding of the reasons behind the increased numbers of early guilty pleas noted in both Crown and Magistrates courts. As Chair of the LCJB, she has facilitated work in this area, and it is one of the golden threads which runs through the Board's work, due to its potential to free up court times and accelerate the resolution of cases. She spoke about the split of cases on a GAP (Guilty Anticipated Plea) and NGAP (Not Guilty Anticipated Plea) basis, and how

this can focus the work of the courts and probation staff much more effectively, often reducing the time taken for cases to be brought to a conclusion by months. In addition, an increased use of technology has meant that records are able to be accessed in real time during court cases, reducing the need for adjournment and delay.

- 5.5 A question was asked about the Deputy Mayor's understanding of the reasons behind the increased reporting of rape and serious sexual offences (SSO) in general, and particularly in Calderdale. She replied that she believed that people are more confident to come forward to report offences, including historical offences (these can amount to up to one third of cases at any given time), and have been encouraged to do so by her and the Mayor talking about their own lived experience. The figures for Calderdale are believed to be driven by the specific way that the District process offences.
- 5.6 A further question was asked about MSF comparisons of these offences, and if the same reasons for higher reporting mentioned locally are relevant here. The Deputy Mayor replied that yes, they believe that to be the case, and additionally, WYP's outstanding levels of data integrity and reporting will contribute to the figures. It was highlighted that since West Midlands Police were rated inadequate on data integrity and reporting, their 'difference to baseline' numbers mean that they now top the MSF table for these offences. The Deputy Mayor also reminded Panel that WYP have the second highest charge rate in the country at 8.2%.
- 5.7 The Deputy Mayor was asked to clarify what an 'outcome' was for this category of offence. She confirmed that it was any criminal justice outcome; for example a charge, a summons, or a community resolution. For rape, a reference to 'outcome' usually means a charge.
- 5.8 Panel wished to explore further the reasons for the outcome rate for rape being so low at 8.2%. The Deputy Mayor explained her understanding of this, which centred mainly around a high level of victim withdrawals, often due to long timeframes for cases to be resolved (this can take up to 4 years), a lack of empirical evidence, and difficulties identifying perpetrators. She felt that work being undertaken to clear the backlog in courts would help to resolve cases quicker, and talked about a process of end-to-end reviews being undertaken by sub-committees of the LCJB, which are taking a holistic look at the whole process from the victims point of view. The Deputy Mayor also felt that legislative and process changes in this offence category are needed at a national level.
- 5.9 Panel expressed concern over high profile rape and serious sexual assault cases involving serving police officers and the resultant spotlight on all police forces to ensure that policies and practices were in place to root out pockets of unacceptable

culture and behaviour. The Deputy Mayor believed that the response of the police forces to these incidents would be critical in the process of rebuilding trust, and that her office were working with WYP to review processes and embed the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy and the Police Race Action Plan. She recognised that there was work to do in this area, but also acknowledged other measures of success and satisfaction in this area, such as the Crime Survey, which shows that fear of crime is relatively low in West Yorkshire.

- 5.10 The Deputy Mayor was asked if she was content with WYP’s strategy around dealing with burglaries. She reminded Panel that WYP do attend every burglary, and have had significant success in their ‘clear, hold, build’ strategy, as seen in the pilot BD3 Unite where following a full community response to safety and gangs in a specific area of Bradford, burglaries were reduced to zero reports. This approach will be rolled out through West Yorkshire.
- 5.11 A question was asked around WYP’s approach to the ongoing increase in car thefts. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged that this was a challenge for the force, with the increase being driven by keyless car theft and the technology behind them.
- 5.12 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor for an update on the work of the Vision Zero Board in addressing the concerning upwards trajectory in numbers of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the roads of West Yorkshire. In particular, Panel members were interested in how well the partnership approach was working, and whether all partners were engaged fully in the work. The Deputy Mayor replied that the partnerships approach was crucial, and reported that local authorities were working together well. She reminded Panel of the new community-centred approach by the West Yorkshire Camera Safety Partnership in taking decisions as to where to site new safety cameras, and of the increased investment in average speed cameras.
- 5.13 A question was asked about progress towards addressing the proliferation of zombie knives. The Deputy Mayor spoke about the work of Operation Jemlock and the Violence Reduction Partnership (formerly the Violence Reduction Unit) in addressing this, and their success in taking 1,700 knives out of circulation since 2017. She added that the Mayor has written to the Home Secretary to ask her to introduce legislation to ban knives such as these, and that the response has been positive. In addition, she referenced work by WYP to close down third party sellers of these knives, and the continued roll-out of their early intervention programme in schools (Pol-Ed).
- 5.14 At item 3.7, Panel asked for a further breakdown of ethnicity within the senior roles at WYP. The Deputy Mayor agreed to provide this.

5.15 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor what her understanding was of the issue transferring 999 calls through BT, which are noted as causing potential delay. She replied that 999 calls are initially handled through a national service provided by BT, who then put callers through to the most appropriate service; unfortunately, the time taken by BT to do this cannot be separated out from the reported call answering times. She was asked if she believed there would be any issues with the upcoming transition from analogue to digital landlines. She replied that she was not aware of any issues, but would look into this.

5.16 RESOLVED

5.16.1 The Deputy Mayor to provide a further breakdown of ethnicity statistics, focussing on senior roles at West Yorkshire Police.

5.16.2 The Deputy Mayor to check if any issues have been flagged around the upcoming transition from analogue to digital landlines, which could affect 999 call answering times.

6. Policing and Crime Team Complaints Update

6.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced this item, which consists of two parts and covers complaints which are under the responsibility of the Mayor's office, and those dealt with by WYP.

6.2 Panel were reminded that the role of Mayor's office is to determine whether referred complaint outcomes are reasonable and if all processes and avenues of enquiry were followed correctly. The Mayor's Casework and Reviews Manager was in attendance, and summarised the work undertaken by her team over the last year, specifically to the increased numbers of referrals they have handled in that period, and the average time taken to complete a review; this is 13 working days which compares favourably to other MSFs).

6.3 Panel asked if the team had undertaken any training to improve their handling of complaints, since this was identified as an area for development when the report was last brought to Panel. Assurances were given that the team has undertaken and completed training which was made available by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioners (OPCC), and continue to attend events or development sessions where possible and appropriate.

- 6.4 The Deputy Mayor was asked to provide an update on work ongoing to understand the implications of Baroness Casey's report into the Metropolitan Police in the aftermath of the murder of Sarah Everard. Previously, Panel members had requested a report be brought to a meeting, to enable a greater understand of any impact the recommendations may have in West Yorkshire.
- 6.5 The Deputy Mayor responded that she has had in depth discussion with the Chief Constable about these issues, and shared the assurances she had been given around the Force's commitment to its VAWG strategy, it's work on the Race Action Plan, and the roll out of a 3 year strategy around harm and risk. She emphasised that her assurances had not come solely from the Force themselves, but also through thematic inspections, the recent HMICFRS inspection, from listening to police officers and staff on the ground, and attending sessions with the Force's accredited Professional Standards Department (PSD).
- 6.6 The DMPC commented that whilst many of Casey's findings were damning, it is also the case this was not a full efficiency and effectiveness review, rather it was snap shot of the Met's culture and standards.
- 6.7 In response to the areas of serious concern highlighted, WYP had responded by explaining the West Yorkshire position focusing specifically on the work it had undertaken to develop a clear vision and strategy, supported by expected standards of behaviour. This is supported by an in-house HR function which is part of a People Directorate that includes Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, Positive Action Team as well as Health and Wellbeing, Occupational Health and Learning and Organisational Development.
- 6.8 Although not fully representative of the communities served, WYP is improving the recruitment of both women and Black, Minority Ethnic Officers and this is helping to build trust with those communities. DMPC Lowe also pointed to the extensive work being undertaken under the VAWG strategy and the Police Race Action Plan.
- 6.9 Completion of Personal development Plans (which were criticised by Baroness Casey at the Met) are considerably higher in West Yorkshire and all accredited training is recorded and monitored. The introduction of the Safe Lives Domestic Abuse training, the Eight Stages of Homicide training and the oversight of Paladin of our Stalking work, was also cited by the DMPC as areas of good work that would support trust and confidence by victims of these crime types, and the wider community of West Yorkshire.
- 6.10 Scrutiny from a variety of Independent Advisory Groups which had been set up by WYP were also opportunities for further triangulation of police processes in these arenas.

- 6.11 PSD data into disciplinary arrangements was routinely reported to the Mayor and DMPC and she was pleased to note that there was no disproportionality in cases reaching disciplinary hearing level, although there was in misconduct panels which the Mayor and DMPC had asked for further work to be done around, which was being done. DMPC gave assurance about the qualifications of all investigators looking at police misconduct complaints and PSD deal with all criminal and misconduct allegations, which is different from other forces, including the Met.
- 6.12 Panel noted that the Mayor and DMPC also have had reports around vetting practices and this information is regularly updated.
- 6.13 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor to consider articles over the last year or so in the local and national news concerning serving West Yorkshire Police officers, and was asked if, in the light of these, she would consider conducting an independent third party review into culture within the Force. It was felt that at the very least, a dip-sampling exercise would help to give her, the Mayor, and Panel members assurances outside of the Force that everything possible was being done to root out any negative behaviour or culture.
- 6.14 The Deputy Mayor told Panel that only the Chief Constable can make a decision to undertake an audit of the Force. She added that on occasions where concerns are raised with her or the Mayor, these are brought to the Chief Constable, and he is open to a proportionate response each time. The Deputy Mayor stated that at this moment, she had no ‘red flags’ about behaviour or culture which would justify the expense and manpower of a full external audit of West Yorkshire Police. She also assured Panel that she regularly reviews the Force’s PSD reports and currently has no sense of any worrying trends. Any strategic threads identified would be discussed with the Chief Constable and used to influence training and change where needed. The Deputy Mayor also said that Baroness Casey is making a visit to West Yorkshire in the near future, and will spend some time with herself and the Mayor to discuss her report, and it’s wider implications for policing throughout the UK.
- 6.15 Panel accepted these assurances, but asked that the DMPC provide Panel with a paper laying out the assurances she has had from the Force, from monitoring bodies, and from her own interactions with officers. It was requested that such a paper should show the process she goes through to triangulate any concerns raised with her, including dip-sampling and reviewing risk management strategies with the Chief Constable. The Deputy Mayor agreed to provide further information to a private Panel session.

6.16 The Deputy Mayor was asked if she could update Panel on the current status of the National Police Air Service (NPAS), the management of which continues to divert senior officers time. The DMPC agreed to report back to Panel on this.

6.17 RESOLVED

6.17.1 That the Deputy Mayor provide Panel with a paper which sets out the assurances she has had that the Force's senior officers understand and are aware of any issues of negative behaviour and culture in WYP such as those identified in the Casey report. It was requested that the paper additionally shows how the Mayor's office triangulate any concerns raised directly with them.

6.18.2 The Deputy Mayor to update Panel on the current situation regarding WYP's management of the NPAS service.

7. Keeping People Safe and Building Resilience

7.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, which summarises the progress made in this area of the Police and Crime Plan and lists commissioned projects and initiatives under this banner.

7.2 A question was asked around the timeframe for recruiting PCSO's as part of the bus safety work. The Deputy Mayor replied that 5 were already in place, and the remainder were currently undertaking their 13 week training period which mean that all are ready to start in their roles on 1st October 2023.

7.3 At the request of Panel, the Deputy Mayor gave a more detailed update on the West Yorkshire Anti-Slavery Partnership (WYASP).

7.4 The Deputy Mayor was asked if she was certain that funding for the re-commissioning of the adult Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) service was secure. She said that she was, and that the service is a statutory function.

7.4 RESOLVED

7.4.1 Panel noted the report.

8. Mayor's Response to current issues

8.1 The Deputy Mayor updated Panel on the implications of recent news stories about the reclassification of nitrus oxide as a Class C drug, changes to the charring arrangements for police officer misconduct panels, and the commissioning of a review by HMICFRS

into police impartiality ([letter-from-rt-hon-suella-braverman-mp-to-andy-cooke.pdf](#) ([justiceinspectrates.gov.uk](#)). She shared news that the Home Secretary will be visiting her and the Mayor during the upcoming months to discuss policing in the region.

8.2 The Deputy Mayor highlighted the successful policing of the Leeds Carnival, and Leeds Fest this year, with only 1 arrest at the carnival, and 79 at Leeds Fest.

8.3 The Deputy Mayor informed Panel of work that she and the Mayor were undertaking with the British Retail Consortium to highlight and combat retail crime.

9. Published Key Decisions

9.1 The Published Key Decisions were noted. Panel asked for clarity around the procurement of consultancy services when work could be done internally. The Deputy Mayor explained that this was due to financial processes through which funded projects by partners are listed as consultancy fees.

10. Agreed Actions Log

10.1 The Agreed Actions log was noted. Work is ongoing with the Mayor's office to update the Action Log with commentary on completed or ongoing actions where possible.

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 complaints to report against the Mayor or Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 There was no other business.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Item 2 – Draft Minutes 8th September 2023

- 14.1 The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be held at 10.00am on Friday, 10th November 2023 in the Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield.