



West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

Draft Minutes

4th February 2022, Council Chamber, County Hall, Wakefield

PRESENT:	<p>Councillor Mohammed Iqbal</p> <p>Councillor Russell Brown</p> <p>Councillor Tariq Hussain</p> <p>Councillor Sarah Courtney</p> <p>Councillor Sophie Whittaker</p> <p>Councillor Mark Thompson</p> <p>Councillor Andrew Marchington</p> <p>Councillor Barry Anderson</p> <p>Councillor Maureen Tennant-King</p> <p>Mrs Jo Sykes</p> <p>Mr Trevor Lake</p> <p> In attendance</p> <p>Tracy Brabin</p> <p>Alison Lowe</p> <p>Erica Doran</p> <p>Julie Reid</p> <p>Alan Reiss</p> <p>Wendy Stevens</p> <p>Angela Taylor</p> <p>Melissa Liburd</p> <p>John Robins QPM</p> <p>Alisa Newman</p> <p>Katherine Johnson</p> <p> Sharon Fraser</p> <p>Neil Warren</p> <p>Samantha Wilkinson</p> <p>Fiona Bernardo</p>	<p>- Leeds City Council (Chair)</p> <p>- Bradford Council</p> <p>- Bradford Council</p> <p>- Calderdale Council</p> <p>- Calderdale Council</p> <p>- Kirklees Council</p> <p>- Kirklees Council</p> <p>- Leeds City Council</p> <p>- Wakefield Council</p> <p>- Independent</p> <p>- Independent</p> <p> - Mayor of West Yorkshire</p> <p>- Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime</p> <p>- West Yorkshire Combined Authority</p> <p>- West Yorkshire Combined Authority</p> <p>- West Yorkshire Combined Authority</p> <p>- West Yorkshire Combined Authority</p> <p>- West Yorkshire Combined Authority</p> <p>- West Yorkshire Combined Authority</p> <p>- West Yorkshire Combined Authority</p> <p>- Chief Constable, West Yorkshire Police</p> <p>- West Yorkshire Police</p> <p>- West Yorkshire Police</p> <p> - Wakefield Council</p> <p>- Wakefield Council</p> <p>- Wakefield Council</p> <p>- Wakefield Council</p>
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1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jacqui Williams, Cllr Cahal Burke (substituted by Cllr Andrew Marchington), Cllr Amanda Carter (substituted by Cllr Barry Anderson), and Cllr Paul Sullivan (substituted by Cllr Russell Brown).

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 21st January 2022.

2.1 The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

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. Determining the PCC Component of the Council Tax Mayor of West Yorkshire's Precept Proposal 2022/23

5.1 The Mayor introduced her report, which asked Panel to approve her proposal to raise the policing precept element of the council tax by £10 (for Band D properties). She reminded Panel that she had chosen not to raise a Mayoral precept this year.

5.2 The Mayor explained that in a public budget consultation undertaken in January, 62% of respondents were happy to pay an additional amount in their council tax to further fund police activities in West Yorkshire. For Band D properties, the proposed increase will amount to an extra 17p per week. Panel heard that responses to the Police and Crime Plan consultation included approximately 6,500 free text comments, many expressing a desire to see increased numbers of police officers.

5.3 Panel heard that West Yorkshire Police (WYP) have the 4th lowest precept in England and Wales, and that this year's proposed rise was at a lower percentage than the previous year. The Mayor assured Panel that she was mindful of the rising cost of living, but still believed that the increase was the right thing to do to keep the people of West Yorkshire feeling safe.

5.4 Questions were asked around PFI commitments, and the cost and options of potentially exiting from these deals. The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) assured Panel that this had been examined closely, but that any PFI's that WYP had undertaken were reasonable deals and transferring loans to another lender would bring no financial benefit.

5.5 The Mayor was congratulated again on the wide scope of her consultation around the Police and Crime Plan, however questions were asked regarding the reasons for the short length of time given to the Panel to examine the consultation for the precept setting. Members of the Panel expressed their view that a better and fairer consultation would have seen more than one financial option given to members of the public. Learning was requested from other force areas such as West Midlands and North Yorkshire, which had been able to go to consultation earlier.

- 5.6 The Mayor responded that the timing of the consultation was driven by the late arrival of the government settlement, and that she had only wanted to run the consultation when she understood the financial situation properly. The Deputy Mayor added that the Minister of State for Crime and Policing had made it clear in a letter that he expected the Mayor's office to request the full £10 rise in order to access further funding from the Home Office, and that she subsequently felt that they had no alternative option to offer the public.
- 5.7 Panel Members expressed their worry regarding the financial strain that many of their constituents are under at the moment. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor acknowledged this, however felt that in order to deliver the level of operational and strategic policing needed, there was no option but to raise the precept by the proposed amount.
- 5.8 Panel requested technical explanations from WYP's CFO on some areas of the precept, such as detail around the top-slice funding, projected shortfalls and capital reallocations. The CFO explained that most of these costs and commitments were non-negotiable requirements of the Home Office and were reallocated into national schemes and other initiatives.
- 5.9 Questions were asked about rural crime, and anti-social behaviour, and their perceived lack of prominence in the financial commitments and forecasts. The Mayor assured Panel that £5.2m had been ringfenced for passporting to Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) to enable them to continue their work in this area. The Deputy Mayor expanded on how funding is allocated, and explained that rural crime is monitored using the 'threat, harm, risk' methodology which identifies hotspots in rural areas. The Chief Constable added that rural crime does have dedicated officers assigned to it. In response to a question about increasing the use of drones, he said that these are used in certain circumstances, but that they require specially trained officers to use them.
- 5.10 A further question was asked regarding recruitment into WYP, and if high levels of quality candidates were applying to join the force. Both the Mayor and the Chief Constable assured the Panel that the force was currently over subscribed for applications, and that there was no shortage of quality candidates. It was believed that the recent PEEL report had helped with this interest, and that the focus now was on recruiting officers reflective of the communities they serve.

The Mayoral and Policing teams left the meeting at this point to allow Panel members to have a frank discussion about the precept proposal. The meeting continued in public session.

- 5.11 Despite concerns about an impending cost of living crisis, Panel were supportive of the precept proposal. A number of recommendations and asks were discussed and collated to form an official response to the proposal. These were that the Mayor commits to:
- Continuing to prioritise increased investment into neighbourhood policing, supporting partnership working to tackle ASB and low-level crime and retaining PCSO numbers of 566.

- Continuing to ensure that all new recruitment seeks to increase the number of people from under-represented groups to ensure that the Force is truly representative of the communities in West Yorkshire.
- Engaging in early discussion (by November at the latest) with the Panel about the content and format of any public budget consultation to ensure it is accessible to all, and that the outcomes are clear and robust.
- Ensuring that all decisions and reports on the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan include a statement on the impact and / or benefit on children and young people.

A recorded vote was taken on the precept proposal. All Panel members supported the proposal to increase the precept payment as set out in the Mayor’s paper.

The Mayoral and Policing teams re-joined the meeting and were informed of the decision.

5.16 The Mayor thanked all those members and officers who had been involved in the work on the precept proposal, and the public for giving their views during the consultation period.

5.17 RESOLVED

5.17.1 Panel unanimously agreed the Mayor’s precept proposal of an increase of £10 on a Band D property, subject to the commitments outlined above and to provide feedback and recommendations to the Mayor on the proposal by 8th February 2022.

6. Determining the PCC Component of the Council Tax: Process and Role of the Police and Crime Panel

6.1 The legal advisor to the Panel had one amendment to raise in relation to Item 5 - the Mayor’s precept report, at point 2.4. As a result of the 2021 Order providing for the PCC powers to be transferred to the Mayor, the deadline for the Mayor to respond to any such report is “the penultimate working day in February”, which for 2022 is 25th February.

6.2 RESOLVED

6.2.1 Panel noted the amendment.

7. Mayor’s Response to any current issues

7.1 The Mayor commented that the recently released White Paper on Levelling Up detailed a proposed extension to Mayoral powers, which she welcomed. She informed Panel that she would be seeking additional powers enable her to help tackle the most serious crime and also to further influence other criminal justice partners.

- 7.2 The Mayor informed the Panel that following much lobbying of Government she was awaiting a decision on an additional year of funding for the Violence Reduction Unit and would report back on the outcome in due course.
- 7.3 The Mayor reminded Panel that the final Police and Crime Plan would be officially launched on 9th March, to coincide with International Women’s week celebrations, and there would be a full programme of celebrations in conjunction with community groups.
- 7.4 The Mayor reported that following this being raised by the Panel and the Racial Justice Network, West Yorkshire Police have agreed not to automatically link biometric fingerprint data taken in West Yorkshire to the Home Office database.

8. Published Key Decisions

- 8.1 Panel noted the Published Key Decisions.

9. Agreed Actions Log

- 9.1 The Agreed Actions Log was noted.

10. Forward Agenda Plan

- 10.1 The Forward Agenda Plan was noted.

11. Complaints received by the Panel

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

12. Any Other Business

- 12.1 There was no other business raised.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- 13.1 The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be held at 10.00am on Friday, 11th March 2022 in the Old Restaurant, Wakefield Town Hall.