



West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

Draft Minutes

9th December 2022, Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield

PRESENT:	Councillor Al Garthwaite	- Leeds City Council
	Councillor Nicole Sharpe	- Leeds City Council
	Councillor Paul Sullivan	- Bradford Council
	Councillor Sarfraz Nazir	- Bradford Council
	Councillor Mohan Sokhal	- Kirklees Council
	Councillor Anthony Smith	- Kirklees Council
	Councillor Maureen Tennant-King	- Wakefield Council
	Mrs Joanne Sykes	- Independent
	Mr Trevor Lake	- Independent

In attendance

Alison Lowe	- Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime
Wendy Stevens	- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Angela Taylor	- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Julia Clough	- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
DCC Catherine Hankinson	- West Yorkshire Police
Temporary CS Sareth Humpage	- West Yorkshire Police
Alex Spurr	- Wakefield Council
Samantha Wilkinson	- Wakefield Council
Fiona Bernardo	- Wakefield Council

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

3.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Usman Ali, Amanda Carter, Andrew Cooper, Sarah Courtney, Sinead Engel and Robert Thornber.

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 4th November 2022.

2.1. The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

2.2 Matters Arising

The Deputy Mayor was asked if she had up to date figures on the take up of the Ask Angela scheme in hospitality venues, as minuted at the last meeting. She replied that she did not have the figures to hand, but would pass them on when they were received from the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

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. Mental Health update

5.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her paper and highlighted the changes taking place to mental health referrals, the implementation of which she believes will need clear leadership across all partners involved. The changes refer to a revision to the Mental Health Act 1983, and will, by the end of 2022, take away the option to use police custody suites as 'places of safety' when a person is detained under section 136 of the Act. Responsibility for providing this 'safe space' will then rest solely with health and social care partners.

5.2 The Deputy Mayor was clear in her opinion that people with mental health difficulties should never be placed in police custody, however, she acknowledged that the change will place additional pressure on the mental health sector, where capacity is already greatly stretched.

5.3 The Deputy Mayor highlighted the significant number of calls into the police contact centre which have a mental health element, clarifying the differentiation in figures between calls where mental health is logged as the main issue, and those where it is a contributing factor.

5.4 The Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) added that despite being able to do so, West Yorkshire Police (WYP) made a conscious policy decision not to bring any person detained under section 136 into custody, believing that a police cell is not the right place for a person with a mental illness; instead seeking to ensure that the person is seen by the most suitable health provider. However, she highlighted that issues arise when a person is taken into police custody and it then becomes obvious that the person is suffering from a mental illness. This then triggers certain procedures which must be followed and it can take time to find the correct care for that person, often adding to their distress and trauma.

- 5.5 A question was asked regarding steps taken to ensure that police officers dealing with people with mental health distress are not placed in invidious positions themselves. The DCC assured Panel that WYP work with the Police Federation on this subject, and that every effort is made to avoid such situations.
- 5.6 Panel asked about the numbers and how long it will take partners to develop the capacity to take additional volume following these changes?
- 5.7 The Deputy Mayor stated that she hoped that high level discussions were taking place within the health and social care sectors. She assured Panel members that the position will be monitored and if there are major issues with particular health trusts then she will feed back to Panel members and local authorities.
- 5.8 A question was asked about how a trauma based approach is used in West Yorkshire Police, and about the training that officers undergo. The Deputy Mayor detailed the training provision, a full programme of which has been rolled out to first response officers initially. A member of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is leading on the training provision across all West Yorkshire partners. The DCC added that the trauma informed approach helps with and impacts on all police work, not just cases with a mental health element.
- 5.9 The Deputy Mayor was asked how she works with West Yorkshire Police to address and prioritise mental health amongst other competing commitments. She replied that the subject is discussed regularly in Community Outcome Meetings (COM) which are livestreamed and accessible to the public, with the Police Federation and relevant trade unions, and with victim and witness support groups. She added that the Mayor has the power to convene chief executives of local ICBs if there are questions about how well they are delivering on mental health targets and priorities, and that together, they are working towards a more strategic approach to mental health, in addition to the day to day firefighting of issues.
- 5.10 Panel agreed that a strong working relationship with the ICBs would be crucial in pursuing positive outcomes in mental health provision. The DCC added that the Chief Constable has recently met with South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYFT) at their request, to discuss working together on mental health provision.

5.11 RESOLVED

- 5.11.1** Panel noted the report and the work that is being undertaken to deliver objectives relating to mental ill-health in the Police and Crime Plan.

6. Performance Monitoring

- 6.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her paper, highlighting that for clarity, the report is structured to match the four priorities of the Police and Crime Plan.

- 6.2 The Deputy Mayor was asked if she could include comparisons with other police forces in the data, and she replied that she could, and would do so going forward. The Mayor’s office can also provide comparisons with other Mayoral authorities.
- 6.3 A question was asked about the reason for the difference in re-offending rates for young people and adults. Panel heard that because the figures have a 12 month lag in order to monitor re-offending, the figures relate to lockdown periods where crimes associated with young people (such as anti-social behaviour) were less prevalent, however drug dealing and other offences more usually committed by adults increased. In addition, the Deputy Mayor believes that the work of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) is helping to divert young people away from crime, and that the combination of the VRU and Operation Jemlock are driving factors in the reduction of knife related crimes, homicides and hospital admissions amongst under 25’s.
- 6.4 The Deputy Mayor was asked if she had any knowledge as to why there was a significant gap between women and men, when reporting cyber crime. The Deputy Mayor and the DCC did not have substantive data to explain this, however, on the request of Panel members, it was agreed that WYP would explore the reasons for this. The Deputy Mayor was clear that this exercise would take some time (perhaps 3-6 months), due to the wide and disparate nature of cyber crime.
- 6.5 Panel discussed the continuing decline in reported satisfaction levels with the police. The Deputy Mayor provided Panel with national context around recent high profile events and identified a general dissatisfaction towards public services which was exacerbated by the pandemic. She highlighted satisfaction levels amongst victims of domestic abuse in West Yorkshire which have slightly increased year on year, and which she believes are a result of the victim-centred approach of the Mayor’s work on the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agenda. The Deputy Mayor provided further information and context regarding the collection of satisfaction data, namely that the National Crime Survey, which contributes to the figures, is a generic survey conducted via phone. In addition to this, West Yorkshire Police gather additional non-mandated satisfaction information, and have widened and expanded the number of people they reach and the number of crimes covered. However, both the Deputy Mayor and the Deputy Chief Constable acknowledged the general decline and committed to continuing to find ways to improve trust and satisfaction.
- 6.6 RESOLVED**
- 6.6.1** The Deputy Mayor to include comparisons with similar police forces in future performance monitoring reports.

6.6.2 West Yorkshire Police to explore if there is a significant reason why more women than men report cyber crimes.

7. Commissioning Strategy

- 7.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, which details the new draft Commissioning Strategy for the Mayor's office. Its design, which has the sustainability of a thriving third sector at its heart, acknowledges the important role that the sector plays in the heart of communities.
- 7.2 A question was asked about the risks to commissioning in the current economic climate. Panel was reassured by the Deputy Mayor that most core funding is for a three year period and should not be affected by the current situation. She has not been told of any reductions in funding for initiatives such as the VRU. Some additional funding has been received since the core funding, and this may be subject to government review. In advance of any decisions being made, the Mayor's team are undertaking risk assessments in these areas.
- 7.3 The Deputy Mayor flagged a potential risk to existing contractors, who are facing inflationary pressures and will receive no additional government funding to compensate. The Mayor's office are working with selected providers to plug this gap where possible.
- 7.4 The Deputy Mayor was asked what the main differences were between this strategy and the previous one. She responded that this strategy was grounded in values and was subject to a more robust legal framework to enable clarity regarding intentions and process. The document has been co-produced with providers, and she believes has a more collaborative feel than its predecessor.
- 7.5 Panel asked if specific themes had been planned into the document, and the Deputy Mayor replied that it had been aligned with the themes of the Police and Crime Plan, however some thematic approaches have been influenced by available funding pots. The Deputy Mayor was keen to recognise that partners are often the best people to lead and manage bids and she plans to encourage this where possible.
- 7.6 Assurance was sought regarding the governance of the commissioning process, and the Deputy Mayor was asked if she could confirm that all providers are subject to robust feasibility checks. The Deputy Mayor gave this assurance and described the standardised application process which is applied to contracts of all sizes. Due diligence checks are carried out as standard, and the process used has been positively acknowledged by the Ministry of Justice.
- 7.7 RESOLVED**
- 7.7.1** Panel noted the report and agreed to feedback general comments on the draft strategy outside the meeting.

8. Mid-Term Financial Forecast

- 8.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her paper, which contains the latest financial update from West Yorkshire Police. The paper also sets out the draft precept consultation questions for 2023, which the Mayor's office are planning to make available in a written format in addition to the usual online version. Staff are also planning to undertake face-to-face consultations and hope to reach a wider audience than with the on-line consultation alone.
- 8.2 Panel heard that whilst the MTFF position is slightly improved on previously reported figures, however, the Deputy Mayor informed Panel that the Home Office have confirmed that the Force will not provide any additional support towards the increased energy costs, which is around £18m. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged that whilst work continues towards closing the funding gap, this leaves the Force in a very difficult financial situation.
- 8.3 The Deputy Mayor was asked to clarify figures quoted regarding the planned new officer intake. She assured Panel that West Yorkshire Police would achieve the promised numbers from the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) and the Mayor has written to the Home Office to confirm that 852 new officers over a three year period will be delivered.
- 8.4 Panel expressed concern that staff cuts may be the only substantial way to reduce costs, paradoxically at the same time as the Mayor is delivering on her promise to increase numbers of police officers. The Deputy Mayor acknowledged that the Force will be looking at every possible way to make savings, and this is initially likely to be in areas such as staff vacancies, by using reserves, by reducing overtime and through prioritising initiatives. There are no plans to cut police officer numbers. This was welcomed by Panel, although concern was expressed that police officers would have to pick up staff duties if those vacancies were left unfilled.
- 8.5 The Deputy Mayor was asked if she thought that the current financial situation posed a serious risk to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan and to the operational priorities of the police. She agreed that it did, and that this concern was now woven into the Force risk documentation and processes. The Deputy Chief Constable agreed and further added that priority based budgeting was being deployed and the senior team have planned to make savings and minimise in-year spend. The Deputy Mayor assured Panel that she had every confidence in the senior staff who would be driving the plan and strategy to manage the financial situation, and that they would be providing a further update in February 2023.
- 8.6 Questions were asked about the precept consultation process. Panel sought to understand how respondent's personal information would be used, if the Mayor's office could add in examples of what precept money would be spent on, and if the wording could be reduced with plainer English being used. The Deputy Mayor responded that information was collected in line with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010, and was used to provide evidence of inclusivity. She also agreed

that her office would look to include examples of planned spend if appropriate and to simplify language wherever possible.

8.7 RESOLVED

8.7.1 The Deputy Mayor to consider including examples of proposed spend in the consultation questionnaire, and to simplify language where possible.

9. Mayors Response to Current Issues

9.1 The Deputy Mayor shared copies of the new Safety of Women and Girls strategy, which was launched in November by the Mayor. She shared that she is currently working on a Victims and Witnesses Strategy which is under consultation with the Criminal Justice Board and will come to Panel at a future date for feedback.

9.2 A further consultation is underway on the safety of public parks, which will focus on two parks in each of West Yorkshire's five districts. The University of Leeds is undertaking a study to look at the physical design of parks and how changes can be made to increase safety. This report will be shared when available.

9.3 The Deputy Mayor updated the Panel on the launch of a stalking service for domestic abuse victims. The Mayor identified a need for this provision at the start of her term of office, and since then a stalking advocacy service has been established and has received over 200 referrals to date which feed into a new dedicated stalking team at West Yorkshire Police. In addition, the Mayor has consulted with Jane Monckton-Smith, Professor of Public Protection at the University of Gloucester, to inform further work on stalking.

9.4 The Deputy Mayor further updated the Panel on night time economy projects funded through the latest Home Office Safer Streets funding, including a taxi marshall service which has been launched in Bradford.

9.5 RESOLVED

9.5.1 The Mayor's office circulated copies of the Safety of Women and Girls strategy, and will disseminate the University of Leeds report into public park design when available.

10. Published Key Decisions

10.1 Panel welcomed the three year extension to the Chief Constable's contract that the Mayor had secured and asked to pass their congratulations to the Chief Constable.

11. Agreed Actions Log

11.1 The Agreed Actions log was noted.

12. Forward Agenda Plan

12.1 The Forward Agenda Plan was noted. A request was made to schedule another financial update into the Plan in September, due to the current challenging situation.

12.1 RESOLVED

12.1.2 An additional financial update to be scheduled for September 2023.

13. Complaints Received by the Panel

13.1 The Panel noted that there are no new recorded complaints.

14. Any Other Business

14.1 The Deputy Mayor shared two recent successes. West Yorkshire Police have recently been recognised for their work on the ‘smart water’ initiative and a Senior Digital Forensic Investigator within the Yorkshire & Humber Regional Cyber Crime Unit (RCCU) has been recognised at the National Cyber Awards for his dedication to cyber investigation and the key role he has played in a number of advancements in the area.

14.2 Panel congratulated West Yorkshire Police on their achievements.

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 3rd February 2022, in the Old Court Room, Wakefield Town Hall.