



**West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel**

**Draft Minutes**

**10<sup>th</sup> November 2023, Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	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 Susan Lee-Richards	- Kirklees Council
	Councillor Anthony Smith	- Kirklees Council
	Councillor Gwen Lowe	- 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
Catherine Hankinson	- West Yorkshire Police
Katherine Johnson	- 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 Eileen Taylor 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 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023.**

2.1. The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. The Deputy Mayor was asked if the verbal update she gave in the meeting around the implications of the Casey report could be shared publicly, as a paper. She agreed to consult with West Yorkshire Police (WYP) regarding this and will let Panel know the outcome of her discussion.

**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 Councillor Ann Kingstone declared an interest at Item 6 – Energy Management Report.

**5. Mid-Term Financial Forecast – October 2023**

5.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, with support from the Director of Finance and Commercial Services at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). The report has been brought to Panel as a result of the Mayor's Precept Commitment 3 - to provide Panel with a half year revised MTFF to assure them that required efficiencies are on track in line with projections. The report summarises the current interim financial position of WYP in advance of the full report which is scheduled to be brought to Panel in February.

5.2 Panel noted at 3.1.3 that the majority of the cost pressures relate to pay awards, with a 7% increase awarded in the current financial year (a 4% increase over initial assumptions). At 3.1.5, the report assumes pay awards at a level of 3% for 2024/25, dropping to 2% each year thereafter. Panel asked if this was a realistic assumption, given that inflation remains high. The Assistant Chief Officer replied that it was anticipated that any pay increases over 3% would be funded by the Home Office, as had happened in the current year.

5.3 The Deputy Mayor was asked to clarify why, in Appendix A, the PFI line seems to have been merged with the Rent and Rates line for 2024/25 onwards. The Director of Finance and Commercial Services committed to amending the report to reflect this concern, and additionally agreed to provide clarification around the references to "75p income loss and CT support" in the same report, when the final version comes to Panel in February.

5.4 Discussion took place around the process of priority based budgeting (PBB) as a financial strategy. This centres around identifying efficiencies as well as cash savings, and has resulted in changes being made to free up more front line officers. In addition, recruitment processes have been changed to enable faster progression of candidates.

5.5 A question was asked around current vacancy factors, and the Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that WYP was currently running at 0% for officer vacancies, and 9% for staff.

**5.6 RESOLVED**

**5.6.1 The Director of Finance and Commercial Services to amend the report to i) continue to show two separate lines for PFI, and Rent and Rates, and ii) provide clarification around the references to “75p income loss and CT support”, before the final version of the report comes to Panel in February.**

**6. Energy Management Report**

6.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced this item, which responds to the Mayor’s second precept commitment asking her to ensure that WYP’s Energy Management Strategy exploits all opportunities for delivering sustainability and energy cost efficiencies for reinvesting within the overall budget.

6.2 The report details sustainability initiatives undertaken so far, and notes the appointment of a dedicated Sustainability Officer within WYP. The paper details that no additional funding has been allocated for de-carbonisation, so progress will be incremental.

6.3 A question was asked around how well sustainability was being embedded into new capital projects, such as the new Kirklees District HQ. The Chief Officer assured Panel that making the building carbon neutral was a priority. She added that she chairs an internal group of senior officers which looks for opportunities to switch to and embed sustainable options where possible, and she reinforced the commitment of WYP to progress this agenda.

**6.4 RESOLVED**

**6.4.1** Panel noted the report.

**7. Council Tax precept consultation 2024-25**

- 7.1 The Deputy Mayor introduced her report, which details initial planning for the public precept consultation, in advance of the precept setting in February 2024. The government have yet to confirm if the precept cap for 2024 will remain the same as 2023, at £15.
- 7.2 Discussion took place around the proposed questions in the consultation, with Panel members keen to understand if the process and methodology for the survey had been reviewed since last year, and how it compared with other comparable precept consultation surveys. Staff from the Mayor’s office explained how the survey is undertaken through postal surveys, an online questionnaire and through in-person focus groups, with the latter being added in 2022 to increase representation from hard-to-reach groups, in conjunction with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).
- 7.3 Panel raised concerns around the response rate for the survey and around the wording of questions, with concerns that those chosen may be interpreted as ‘leading’ or ‘closed’. They also felt that the number of questions was low (two).
- 7.4 Panel also asked the Mayor if there had been a formal evaluation of the methodology and approach of the consultation.
- 7.5 Officers explained that a conscious decision had been made to keep the survey short and simple in an attempt to achieve the best possible response rate. The Mayor’s Engagement Manager did acknowledge however that members of focus groups did request a more open conversation around policing and policing priorities and the team were looking at how best to structure this year’s groups based on that feedback.
- 7.6 The Deputy Mayor was asked about the questions around the respondents’ race or colour. She replied that the Equalities Act requires the questions to be asked. Panel requested sight of the diversity breakdown collected from the responses, to further their understanding of which groups might be underrepresented. In addition, they asked for sight of the return rate of the postal survey and a breakdown of responses by different methods. (will have by Feb)
- 7.7 A further question was asked around the representativeness of the questionnaire with only a 0.1% response over the population of West Yorkshire. The Deputy Mayor replied to say that her office had made every effort to ensure that the survey was as inclusive and circulated as widely as possible.
- 7.8 Panel members were assured that the team were working with CSPs to increase outreach as much as possible , and were actively seeking out under-represented groups such as the under-35 age group. Members were asked to pass on details of any groups they would like to be involved in the consultation, and were invited to attend

focus groups in their ward, details of which would be shared by the Mayor’s office in due course.

7.9 Panel reminded the Deputy Mayor that a discussion had taken place at last February’s precept meeting about the need to include a supplementary question for those who did not support the precept, to ascertain whether this was due to personal finance worries or because of a lack of confidence in the police. At that time, the Mayor had also agreed to consider providing the public with detail of the implications of different options and to seek to understand the reasoning behind people’s choices and their perception of the Force.

7.10 The Deputy Mayor committed that if she was still in role, following the elections in May 2024, she would provide a covering paper to this report, based on findings from the focus groups this year.

7.11 The Deputy Mayor reminded Panel that they had specifically asked for this paper to be brought to them earlier in the year, to enable a longer period of time to discuss and suggest revisions to the consultation before it was sent out. Some of the data (such as more detailed financial data from WYP) is not available this early in the year, so the paper presented can only show information that is currently available. She committed to providing further detail when it was released and available to share. Panel acknowledged this, however were still keen to see comparative data on trends over previous years, which they felt would have been useful as background information.

#### **7.12 RESOLVED**

**7.12.1** The Deputy Mayor to provide the following breakdowns of information from this year’s consultation survey: ethnicity, return rate of the postal survey and responses by method.

### **8. Mayor’s Response to current issues**

8.1 The Deputy Mayor updated Panel on a recent meeting she had had with the Home Secretary. West Yorkshire Police have been chosen as part of the HMICFRS inspection into activism and impartiality in the police.

8.2 A new team of 15 Safer Travel Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are now patrolling bus stations and buses across the West Yorkshire, with the aim of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, safeguarding of women and girls, and reassuring and protecting more vulnerable travel users.

8.3 The Mayor’s video aimed at tackling everyday harassment and inappropriate male behaviour towards women and girls has been viewed more than a million times on platforms such as TikTok, and has been shown in venues such as sports clubs.

8.4 The Deputy Mayor shared news of the Vision Zero strategy launch.

8.5 The Deputy Mayor updated Panel on the latest developments regarding the future management of the National Police Air Service (NPAS). Negotiations have been progressing with a potential politically impartial organisation to take over control of the Service.

8.6 WYP are monitoring any issues or reports of hate crime related to the current situation in Gaza and Israel, with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor being kept updated at all times.

## **9. Published Key Decisions**

9.1 A question was asked around the commissioning of a provider for online harms intervention. Panel asked if a report could be brought to a meeting to show progress in this area.

### **9.2 RESOLVED**

**9.2.1** A item on online harm intervention to be added to the Forward Agenda plan.

## **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.

10.2 Panel asked the Deputy Mayor when they would have sight of previously requested statistics showing the ethnic breakdown of senior leaders in WYP. The Deputy Mayor replied that this would be in the December meeting.

## **11. Forward Agenda Plan**

11.1 The Forward Agenda Plan was noted.

## **12. Complaints Received by the Panel**

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

12.2 The Police and Crime Panel Officer explained that, due to a technical issue with the new Panel website, some complaints sent via an electronic form were not directed to Police and Crime Panel officers for processing. There were seven complaints covering a period from September 2022 until August 2023.

2.2 Once the error was discovered, officers had immediately assessed the complaints (none concerned the Mayor or Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) and contacted all complainants immediately to explain the situation and apologise, before signposting to the correct body to deal with their complaint.

2.4 Panel were assured that the website issue has now been resolved to ensure that this situation cannot happen again in the future.

### **13. Police and Crime Panel Budget Outcome 2022/23 and Draft Budget 2023/24**

13.1 The Police and Crime Panel Officer updated members on the Panel budget outcome for 2022/23 and the Home Office grant agreement for 2023/24.

#### **13.2 RESOLVED**

**13.2.1** Panel noted the report.

### **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, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in the Old Court Room, Town Hall, Wakefield.