



**West
Yorkshire
Policing
& Crime**

**Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire**



**Alison Lowe
Deputy Mayor for
Policing & Crime**

Item 8

Report to: Police and Crime Panel

Date: 12 April 2024

Subject: **Assurance Paper**

Report of: Alison Lowe, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To provide members of the Police and Crime Panel with information on how the Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire for Policing and Crime (DMPC) is reassured as to the work undertaken by West Yorkshire Police in relation to its performance and culture.

2. INFORMATION

2.1 Background and context

2.1.1 In October 2021, the then Home Secretary commissioned Baroness Louise Casey to examine the culture and operations of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The review found significant and widespread cultural and organisational failings.

2.1.2 Whilst the focus of the review was on the MPS, the content of the review and the associated public and media response has affected all police forces, including West Yorkshire Police (WYP).

2.1.3 The Mayor has previously released a statement in response to the publication of the review: “This review makes for shocking reading and exposes vile behaviour and attitudes that undermine the work of policing across the country - including here in West Yorkshire.

“We share Louise Casey’s ambition to protect women and girls from harm and want to work with her to identify how to achieve that in our region and beyond.

“There should be zero tolerance for violence against women and girls and my message to anybody affected is to come forward and report it - because you will be heard.”

2.1.4 At the September 2023 meeting of the Police and Crime Panel, the Panel expressed concern over high profile rape and serious sexual assault cases involving serving police officers in other forces 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

Item 8 – Assurance Paper

behaviour. The Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire for Policing and Crime (DMPC) stated that the response of the police forces to these incidents would be critical in the process of rebuilding trust, and that her office was 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 (Sep 2023, Item 5.9).

2.1.5 The DMPC provided an overview of the various mechanisms in place to provide assurance as to WYP's culture and practices, as well as responses to specific incidences and reports. These assurances were accepted by the Panel (Sep 2023, Item 6.15). Topics discussed included:

- Partnership working with WYP on the Safety of Women and Girls Strategy and the Police Race Action Plan, which has featured strong leadership within WYP on related issues.
- The role of Mayor's office to determine whether referred complaint outcomes are reasonable and if all processes and avenues of enquiry were followed correctly.
- Assurances received from the Chief Constable on the roll out of a three year strategy around harm and risk.
- Assurances from other sources, including 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).
- Frequently updated reports around vetting practices and progress, which are shared with the Mayor and DMPC.

2.1.6 The Panel requested an overview by the DMPC of the various ways she seeks to triangulate information received from West Yorkshire Police to assure herself and the Mayor, on behalf of the citizens of West Yorkshire. In response to that request, the DMPC agreed to provide a verbal update (Sep 2023, Item 6.15).

2.1.7 At the November 2023 Police and Crime Panel, the DMPC 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 (Nov 2023, Item 2).

2.1.8 This paper follows on from assurances already on record, and the verbal update provided to Panel.

2.2 Assurance from the DMPC

2.2.1 The DMPC reported the following: In response to the Panel's request, I would like to reassure the Panel that I use a wide variety of means to satisfy myself that I am being given a full picture of performance and other areas of interest within West Yorkshire police, especially around understanding its culture. Since my appointment in July 2021, I have sought to make contact with a range of stakeholders and partners, as well as police officers, staff, organisations and members of the public and victims of crime.

2.2.2 I am aware that resourcing continues to be a concern for WYP, as it was identified for the MPS by Baroness Casey; this has an impact on the ability of Forces to deliver the service they aspire to, particularly within local and community policing teams. This is why I continue to place a focus on sustainable funding and requested that the precept

Item 8 – Assurance Paper

be set at an appropriate level at the January Panel.

- 2.2.3 This report summarises a range of tools and approaches we have taken to both triangulate information we receive but also to understand what is happening and what could be improved with West Yorkshire Police, more widely. It is the sum of all these activities and measures that creates a robust overview of the culture and performance of WYP, and enables further improvements to be made.
- 2.2.4 I can provide reassurance to the Panel that WYP’s senior officers understand and are aware of the issue of negative behaviour and culture in WYP and are responding appropriately.
- 2.2.5 I would like it to be noted that the Casey Review was not a full efficiency and effectiveness review, rather it was snapshot of the MPS’s culture and standards at that time. Many areas identified for improvement in the Review are significantly different at WYP, such as:
- The Casey Review highlighted that at the MPS “the vital role of Human Resources has been outsourced and is too distant from local policing needs.” WYP has an internal People Directorate, which includes HR functions. This team covers multiple areas of work that directly impact on both culture and recruitment functions including Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, the Positive Action Team as well as Health and Wellbeing, Occupational Health and Learning and Organisational Development.
 - The Casey Review also pointed to a “poor approach to management and supervision,” at the MPS, including the fact that Performance and Development Reviews were not consistently undertaken and there were issues in the delivery and recording of training. WYP have recently introduced a new PDR system. This system is still being embedded and staff are being upskilled in its usage. Despite this, completion rates are still comparably higher and all accredited training is recorded and monitored. Completion of Personal Development Plans 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 is evidence that WYP takes seriously the development of officers and staff, and the impact on trust and confidence of the public.
 - The Casey Review noted the depletion of neighbourhood teams at the MPS, as well as their frequent deployment “as a resource for other parts of the frontline.” WYP have focused on the maintenance of Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs), including the support of PCSOs. Neighbourhood Policing is part of WYP’s core policing offer, considered business as usual and is embedded across all five Districts. While there have been challenges during the high demand period last summer, and with some vacancies, it has been agreed to allocate 66 FTE from the Police Uplift Programme budget to strengthen WYP NPT’s. NPTs include PCSOs and these have been boosted by recent recruitment efforts.

2.3 Public engagement and working with partners

- 2.3.1 **Regular quarterly meetings with Unison, GMB and the Police federation.** These are utilised by the DMPC to ask about emerging issues and receive information/intelligence, as well as share her knowledge of what is happening in the force.
- 2.3.2 **Community engagement.** The DMPC and Mayor engage with the communities of West Yorkshire on a very regular basis and take their comments/experiences back to WYP. A good example of this is a recent Black Boy Joy event, where a group of Black boys aged 11-17 spoke about the mental health impact of stop and search. When the DMPC asked

Item 8 – Assurance Paper

the boys what they would like her to say to the Chief Constable, they asked to meet him personally and tell him themselves. This was arranged for February 2023 and the police heard first hand some of the impact of stop and search. As a result of their feedback, the boys were invited to visit Operation Jemlock staff to talk about stop and search and were consulted in the development of a QR code for handheld devices. WYP intends to keep in touch with the boys as part of their Police Race Action Plan workstream (PRAP).

- 2.3.3 **Collaboration on communications.** The Policing and Crime Team are active members of the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Communications Group. The group works to co-ordinate awareness raising and crime prevention campaigns across the Mayor's office, West Yorkshire Police, and allied community safety partners. This aids information flow and creates joined up messaging, which is beneficial for the public. Through this group, the Mayor and DMPC supported the Safe to Play campaign, 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse and White Ribbon events.
- 2.3.4 **Local Authority Leaders.** The DMPC meets all the West Yorkshire Leaders quarterly and takes on board their experiences and feedback about WYP. For example, following feedback from one leader on the use of the Safeguarding portal to triage cases, the DMPC was able to raise this via other governance mechanisms. These meetings also result in further partnership working and transparency. For example, when concerns about policing of a city centre were raised, the DMPC was able to organise a meeting of the Council representative and the police to understand the issues and help formulate a plan. The DMPC was then given a full report from the force into all the work being done in that locality, which she triangulated with local councillors, the Business Improvement District and traders, at a public meeting.
- 2.3.5 **National policing bodies.** The DMPC meets with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and College of Policing multiple times each year. HMICFRS have provided feedback on a range of matters, including the ability to manage online harm (via their thematic inspection). The College of Policing have been able to raise concerns via these meetings, which can then be addressed directly with WYP.
- 2.3.6 **Utilising convening powers.** The DMPC is able share information, challenge and collaborate through a range of boards and forums that are organised, hosted and/or chaired by the DMPC and the Policing and Crime Team. This includes thematic groups such as the West Yorkshire Domestic and Sexual Abuse Board, partner groups like the Community Safety Partnership Forum, and strategic groups like the Partnership Executive Group, which the Chief Constable attends. These Boards and Forums have strong attendance from WYP and other statutory agencies and enable partners to both work with and challenge WYP.

2.4 Collaboration with and challenge of WYP

- 2.4.1 **Planning for additional resources.** The momentum behind our work on the safety of women and girls resulted in a review of the resources available to deliver our ambitions. As a result, the formation of a Women and Girl's Safety Unit was agreed; a collaboration between the Policing and Crime Team, the Violence Reduction Partnership, and WYP. The taskforce will deliver work to improve the safety of women and girls and support the delivery of the related national Strategic Policing Requirement. It will enable the Policing and Crime Team to work even more closely with WYP on this vital area of work.
- 2.4.2 **Community Outcomes Meetings.** These meetings take place between the Chief Constable and the Mayor and focus on important policing and community safety issues that are of a high public interest. These meetings offer greater transparency to

Item 8 – Assurance Paper

communities on how the Mayor holds the Chief Constable to account on these important issues. They also provide an excellent opportunity for the Mayor and DMPC to raise issues with the Chief Constable on behalf of members of the community.

- 2.4.3 **Performance Scrutiny Meetings.** On a quarterly basis WYP report to the Mayor and DMPC on performance over the preceding period, giving an oversight of the measures from the Police and Crime Plan and other key performance areas. This documentation forms the basis of the Performance Update to the Police and Crime Panel. This data ensures a clear understanding of performance across crime types and ensures that resources are being targeted in the right areas.
- 2.4.4 **Quarterly Governance Meetings.** On a quarterly basis the Chief Constable reports to the Mayor and DMPC on a range of governance matters, including financial management, complaints and conduct, management of change and litigation as well as providing an operational update. This is a key accountability meeting along with the Community Outcomes Meeting and Performance Scrutiny Meeting.
- 2.4.5 **Direct access to systems.** To enhance transparency and to support more efficient working, casework staff in the Policing and Crime Team have direct access to Niche, including body worn video, to carry out the complaint reviews rather than relying on WYP reporting. In addition, performance staff have direct access to Force systems to retrieve performance data, as well as confidential national Home Office data via PowerBi.
- 2.4.6 **FOI requests.** The Policing and Crime Team are routinely copied into many of the Force FOI responses and the Mayor has pressed the police to provide more information and context in these responses for areas that have a high public interest. We additionally have a member of staff sitting on the WYP internal meeting. This meeting reviews the FOI requests received each week and agrees the handling route/sensitivity.
- 2.4.7 **Scrutiny Pannels.** Scrutiny Panels allow members of the public to hold West Yorkshire Police to account via review of incidents, policing powers and tactics. Panel observations, feedback and recommendations facilitate continuous learning, improvement of police services and identification of best practice. Panels undertake dip sampling (selecting records at random) to achieve greater transparency and involvement and Body Worn Video footage may also be viewed to demonstrate interactions with the public. An assigned Police Senior Leadership Team member ensures that the scrutiny activity record is reviewed and acted upon/shared as appropriate with WYP stakeholders. They also ensure that the scrutiny group is appraised of actions relating to policy, practice and performance in response to recommendations, concerns or challenge raised.
- 2.4.8 **Professional Standards Department.** A member of staff in the Mayor's Policing and Crime Team sits on the PSD Scrutiny Panel that meets quarterly with staff associations and an independent chair to look at and provide critical challenge in decision making in PSD in relation to conduct and vetting. Chaired by an independent, and appropriately vetted, member of the public, this panel is attended by staff networks, unions, and the Police Federation representatives. The Professional Standards Department assesses and coordinates any complaints made about the conduct of WYP officers and staff.
- 2.4.9 **Neighbourhood Policing Teams.** The DMPC receives feedback via regular visits to Neighbourhood Policing Teams and other policing visits. This has resulted in specific issues raised on these visits being brought to the attention of the Chief Constable.
- 2.4.10 **Staff Networks.** Relationships have been established with WYP Staff Networks, including the LGBT Network, Black Police Association, Hindu Association, Muslim Police Association and others. The DMPC has spoken at several network events and proactively

Item 8 – Assurance Paper

shares contact details to enable follow up contact from groups and individuals. This relationship building has enabled groups to bring specific concerns to the DMPC.

- 2.4.11 **Police Chaplaincy.** The DMPC has met with the Police Chaplaincy. This conversation provided early insight into the work the chaplaincy was doing with the force to address some areas of work linked to a specific case.

2.5 Complaints and whistleblowing

- 2.5.1 **The Police and Crime Team whistleblowing facility.** This is open to both staff and officers, and we receive information from current and former staff via this route. Note also that the Force's internal system for whistleblowing, Anonymous Messenger, has a direct reporting line to the Policing and Crime Team for anyone who wants to raise a complaint about the Chief Constable.

- 2.5.2 **Casework.** Casework staff in the Policing and Crime Team respond to issues raised by members of the public, including liaising with WYP to deal with concerns that have been raised and arranging face to face surgery appointments with the DMPC.

- 2.5.3 **Surgeries.** The casework team also facilitate surgery appointments for members of the public to meet with the DMPC to share and discuss their experiences of the police and other criminal justice agencies. There are fixed quarterly surgeries, which allow for about 6 appointments in 2 hours and ad-hoc ones in between. Generally, the DMPC is able to see around 20 people per year in this way, and they are a particularly valuable way of triangulating people's lived experiences with other assurance measures.

- 2.5.4 **National reports.** The Policing and Crime Team receive national reports from super-complaints and reviews, such as the IOPC review into Stop and Search. Following publication of these reports, the Policing and Crime Team ask for a written response from WYP, including information about any risks or opportunities this learning might present. For example, the super-complaint into Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse (PPDA) led WYP to change its domestic abuse policy to now include the police perpetrated abuse procedure. The review of this policy provides support and reassurance for victims of domestic abuse within the Force. The Professional Standards Department hosted a partnership symposium in June 2023 to share the work the Force is doing to tackle police perpetrators of abuse of position for a sexual purpose, sexual misconduct and domestic abuse. The Mayor and DMPC were also able to push for the DA Matters training to be implemented, which it was and over 3,000 officers have received this training.

2.6 Staff expertise and structures at WYCA

- 2.6.1 **Research and Performance.** The Policing and Crime Team has a highly experienced Research & Performance Manager, who has recently been joined by a Research & Performance Officer. This resource is utilised to gather and assess a wide range of data from a variety of sources, which enables tracking and triangulation of performance measures. This function feeds into multiple oversight and governance mechanisms, including the Police and Crime Panel.

- 2.6.2 **Wider expertise.** Some staff within the Policing and Crime Team previously worked within the police force, which means they have a deep and detailed understanding of policing and crime issues. Many colleagues held specialist positions and so have a wealth of specialised knowledge in specific priority areas of work. This policing insight and expertise is balanced by the wider makeup of the staff team, with backgrounds across a range of statutory, private and VCSE sectors. This variety ensures that different skills, experience and views inform the full range of work of the Team.

- 2.6.2 **Internal structures.** The DMPC Chairs the Executive Team meeting, which provides a

Item 8 – Assurance Paper

concrete route from all Policing and Crime staff to the DMPC. This is in addition to regular one to one meetings and attendance at wider staff meetings.

2.6.3 **The Police and Crime Plan.** The structure and content of the Police and Crime Plan means that it cannot be delivered without appropriate challenge of WYP, as well as partnership working. For example, safeguarding and protecting those who are most vulnerable is one of the key themes running through the Police and Crime Plan; several safeguarding themes are captured under our 'Keeping People Safe and Building Resilience' priority.

2.7 A focus on Violence against Women and Girls

2.7.1 A focus on violence against women and girls was included in the Police and Crime Plan for 2021-24, published in March 2022.

2.7.2 The focus for the Safety of Women and Girls Strategy is to deliver long-term societal change to improve the lives of women and girls, and therefore for all people in West Yorkshire.

2.7.3 A full report on the recent work of the Policing and Crime Team in this area was provided to the Panel in March 2024 under the item West Yorkshire Safety of Women and Girls Update. This report included work with WYP that contributes to assurance mechanisms for the DMPC. This includes the new Women and Girl's Safety Unit:

- The additional resource will provide the structure to support, embed and report on the performance of WYP against the Operation Soteria national operating model (to improve the investigation and prosecution of rape cases).
- The Mayor's responsibilities to hold the Chief Constable to account, to reduce serious violence, to convene partners and engage with and inform communities will be supported through the collaboration.
- The Unit will enable the Mayor and DMPC to hold WYP to account on deliverables and metrics for VAWG.
- The Unit will work to improve the quality of risk assessment and investigation on key areas of focus and review of domestic assault, rape, stalking and coercive/controlling behaviours, for every victim, every day.
- We will deliver actions led by the Strategic Lead from WYP, and the Policy Manager in Policing and Crime, leading the workstream for the safety of women and girls to improve outcomes for victims and confidence in policing.

3. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION BENEFITS AND IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Public Sector Equality Duty Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PESD) in the Equality Act 2010, Mayors/PCCs are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate conduct prohibited by the Act (such as discrimination, harassment and victimisation), advance equality of opportunity and foster good relationships between different people.

3.2 This report includes some focused work of the Mayor, DMPC and Combined Authority under the Police and Crime Plan which reflects our commitment toward EDI.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN WEST YORKSHIRE

4.1 Much of the work of the Mayor, DMPC and WYCA in partnership with WYP directly

Item 8 – Assurance Paper

affects young people in West Yorkshire, and elements have been drawn out in the report above.

- 4.2 As age is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act, all pieces of work ensure that young people treated fairly, they are treated with respect and that they feel welcomed and valued.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no specific financial implications to flag.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications to flag.

7. EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

- 7.1. External consultation is embedded in the work of the Policing and Crime Team, in order to support the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan and the various scrutiny and governance functions detailed in the report above.
- 7.2. Most recently, consultation in relation to the setting of the Police precept has generated a range of information, which will be summarised and used to inform future work.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1. That the Police and Crime Panel note this report.