

North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Annual Report 2022/23

Foreword from the Chair

As Chair of the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel I am pleased to introduce the Panel's Annual Report for 2022/23.

Panels are here to provide both support and challenge to their Commissioner, on behalf of the public, as Commissioners take forward their plans to develop efficient and effective policing and fire services. I believe that over the last year, we have continued to demonstrate both of these aspects to best effect, reflecting the views and concerns of residents and working to bring some positive influence to bear around how these services are run.

In terms of our support for our new Commissioner, we have been particularly pleased to endorse the development of a much-needed new Victims' Centre in York and to see the evolving work to tackle violence against women and girls in the force area. We have also, however, been keen to direct appropriate challenge on behalf of the public; for example around the Commissioner's proposal for the development of a new Risk and Resource Model for the fire and rescue service and also in ensuring that the Commissioner is continuing to ensure adequate progress within both services following recent challenging reports from the inspectorate. All of these issues will continue to be a focus for us – as too for the Commissioner and her team - over the coming months.

It has been a period of some change for the Panel itself, too. With the advent of local government reorganisation from 1st April 2023, the Panel shifted from being a body which has comprised nine different local authorities since 2012 to comprising just two; North Yorkshire Council and the City of York. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those Members – from both North Yorkshire and City of York – who stood down from the Panel in the last few months for their invaluable contribution to our work over the last few years. We have a number of new Members now from both authorities whom I know are keen to continue this important support and challenge role and I look forward to working with them.

Cllr Carl Les
Chair

July 2023

1. What is the Police, Fire and Crime Panel?

Police and Crime Panels were established in England and Wales in 2012 to provide a check and balance function in relation to the performance of Police and Crime Commissioners, who also came into being at that time. Panels have a wide remit to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other actions taken, by the Commissioner in connection with the discharge of the Commissioner's functions. Panels have oversight of some of the Commissioner's key documents, decisions and reports, requiring them to provide information and answer any questions which the Panel considers necessary.

Police and Crime Panels are joint scrutiny bodies of the local authorities in the police service area. They are mainly comprised of elected members from these authorities, with normally at least two independent members who are co-opted to bring additional or complementary skills and knowledge. Councillor membership of a Panel must be geographically and politically proportionate. The Panel's membership in this reporting period is outlined in section 8 below.

With the transfer of fire and rescue governance to the Commissioner in 2018, the North Yorkshire Panel duly became the Police, Fire and Crime Panel ("the Panel"), to reflect a broadening out of its scrutiny functions.

The Panel does not scrutinise the Chief Constable or Chief Fire Officer or hold them to account. They are not required to attend Panel meetings but can be asked to attend with the Commissioner where it is felt that providing further operational context or clarification to a discussion would be helpful.

The Commissioner has responsibility for setting the direction, objectives and budgets of North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and for holding the Chief Constable/Chief Fire Officer to account. The Panel's role is to scrutinise and support the performance of the Commissioner and specifically to conduct the following statutory functions:

- To review the Commissioner's draft Police and Crime / Fire and Rescue Plans and make a recommendations on these;
- To review and make recommendations on proposed appointments for the roles of Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer, in addition to some other senior roles – the Panel also has the power to veto proposed appointments for Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer.
- To review and make recommendations on the Commissioner's proposed level of Council Tax precept for policing and fire – the Panel has a power of veto for the Commissioner's first precept proposal.
- To review and make recommendations on the Commissioner's draft Annual Reports for Policing and Fire and Rescue;
- To consider non-criminal complaints made against the Commissioner.

Further details about the Panel's governance and recent publications can be found at <https://nypartnerships.org.uk/pfcp> Meeting papers and agendas can be found on the [North Yorkshire Council website](#).

Panel meetings take place roughly five to six times per year and are held in public. Support to the Panel is provided by the host authority which from 1st April 2023 is North Yorkshire Council.

2. Meetings held during 2022/23

The Panel has returned to holding its meetings in person during this reporting period, rotated between Northallerton, York and Selby. The Panel convened in person and in public on five occasions to undertake Panel business; on 25 May 2022, 21 July 2022, 13 October 2022, 12 January

2023 and 6 February 2023. One meeting was also held as an informal meeting, which was held remotely and live broadcasted on 9th March 2023, due to forecasting of exceptionally bad weather. Panel meetings are live broadcasted and recorded where possible to do so and recordings can be viewed at <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-committees-and-meetings/live-meetings>.

One Panel meeting scheduled for April 2022 was cancelled due to observance of the pre-election period restrictions placed on local authority Members, prior to the elections for North Yorkshire County Council in May 2022.

The Panel remains keen to hear from and engage with the public in its role. While there were no public questions or statements submitted to Panel meetings in this reporting period, it is notable that as at end of March 2023, the average viewing figures for live-broadcasted Panel meetings in the 2022/23 financial year were 123 views per meeting.

Panel members have also continued to meet remotely for more informal briefings and development sessions during the period and these are outlined through this report.

3. Key Areas of Focus for the Panel in 2022/23

a) Scrutiny of proposals for, and implementation of, a new Risk and Resource Model for the fire and rescue service

The Commissioner consulted on her proposals for a new Risk and Resource Model (RRM) for the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service in the summer of 2022. The RRM has already seen – and will see - a number of significant changes to the operational service model. The Panel responded formally to this consultation in August 2022 and has also considered the RRM on three occasions at its meetings over this reporting period due to its significance and the need to keep implementation and review of its impact under review.

The Panel welcomed the Commissioner's planned improvements to prevention, such as an investment in specialist staff to focus on the prevention agenda. However, the Panel expressed its concern that the service's capability to adequately protect and respond to communities – especially in York (Huntington), south Ryedale, Harrogate and Scarborough – could potentially be undermined through changes which will see shifts towards becoming an On-Call fire station (Huntington) and loss of full-time shift fire engines during the night (Harrogate and Scarborough).

Having reviewed all input from the public and other stakeholders, the Commissioner approved the proposed changes in the autumn of 2022. The Panel has requested to see data regarding the response times for Huntington once the changes have fully bedded in, to be able to better understand any impact they may have. There has been a delay to changes being fully implemented in the York area due to ongoing dialogue between the service and the trade unions so the Panel will continue to keep a watching brief.

The Panel has also been keen to get assurance that the plans for prevention will not be impacted by the challenging and uncertain budget position for the fire service. At the Panel's March 2023 meeting, the Chief Fire Officer advised that while he may not be able to invest as significantly in this area as originally hoped, he nevertheless intends to drive forward necessary changes to enhancing prevention.

b) Scrutiny of the Commissioner's performance in relation to ensuring that adequate progress is made within the policing and fire services following the outcomes of inspection reports by HMICFRS

During this reporting period, the Panel has considered the outcomes of:

- an inspection into child protection arrangements at North Yorkshire Police (considered July 2022); and
- an inspection on 'effectiveness, efficiency and people' at North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (considered February 2023)

The Panel's role is not to scrutinise the performance of those services or their operational leaders but to seek assurance that the Commissioner is ensuring an adequate level of progress and improvement is being reached within both services. Both of the above reports found areas that were considered to be inadequate or requiring improvement and as such will remain as key areas of focus for the Panel in the next year.

Child Protection Arrangements

As part of the HMI assessment, 73 child protection cases were selected; of these 13 were determined as 'good', 34 'require improvement' and 26 'inadequate'. Members highlighted concern at the low standards of some of the investigations referenced in the report and that some were also supervised badly. The Commissioner acknowledged gaps in resourcing but that every effort is being made to ensure this is the focus. The Chief Constable highlighted that around a third of detective posts are currently vacant in the service, but that officers can retire and re-join the service and they are looking at ways to retain people in the organisation. It is no longer possible to allocate someone to an investigation without the requisite skills.

The Commissioner was asked about how the inspectorate's recommendations regarding embedding the voice of the child more in investigations is being taken forward. The Panel heard that the Youth Commission have been part of this process. The police now ensure that it is not only specially-trained officers who interview a child but that all officers receive training and have an aide memoire on signs to look out for in a house call generally that might suggest neglect or abuse for example.

The Panel has since reviewed this matter again, in June 2023, and will be reviewing the outcomes of a re-visit in the autumn of 2023.

Efficiency, effectiveness and people at NYFRS

The service was rated as 'inadequate' in two areas and the third (effectiveness) as requiring improvement. Members expressed concern at the downward trend of the service in comparison with the previous inspection report outcomes in 2018/19. In particular, concern was raised that standards have deteriorated since the transfer of governance; particularly around estates and cultural implications, which were seen as 'known issues' prior to the change taking effect. It was, however, acknowledged that the Risk and Resource Model had superseded the 2016 model of risk and resource planning against which the inspectorate had assessed the service.

The Commissioner acknowledged the concerns raised and offered to brief Panel on the Delivery Plan and timescales for planned improvements. The Commissioner highlighted her confidence in the improvements made since the inspection and that robust plans are in place to tackle the major issues identified as of concern by HMICFRS.

The Panel has since reviewed this matter again, in June 2023, following publication of re-visit findings by the inspectorate and will review further in the autumn of 2023.

c) Scrutiny of how effectively wildlife crime is tackled in North Yorkshire

As North Yorkshire remains one of the worst areas in the country for wildlife crime – particularly raptor persecution - the Panel has been keen to review the matter of how effectively this type of crime is being tackled and whether the Commissioner is sufficiently holding the Chief Constable to account for activity to prevent, detect and prepare files for prosecution. The Panel were apprised of the difficulties in getting an accurate picture from crime reporting data as crimes are often recorded as ‘theft’ or other offences and there is no easy way on the central system to categorise as ‘wildlife crime’ for example. The Panel were keen to understand how many successful prosecutions there have been. Securing a prosecution can be difficult and the Panel heard that North Yorkshire Police have now shifted to using anti-social behaviour legislation. The Commissioner is hopeful that a more creative approach in this way will enable better tracking of the behaviour of offenders and the ability to impose more robust sanctions based on behaviour as it escalates, resulting in ‘breaches’.

The Chief Constable has invited the Panel to meet with the Rural Task Force to get a better understanding of their work and the Panel is in the process of arranging visits for its members. The Panel has agreed to keep this issue under review on an annual basis to ensure that adequate progress is being made in terms of prevention, detection and appropriate sanctions being put in place.

d) Review of the Commissioner’s Council Tax precept proposals for policing and fire 2023/24

Policing Precept

The Commissioner put forward a proposal to the Panel on 6 February 2023 to set the policing precept at £295.08, representing an increase of £14.03 (or 4.99%) over the 2022/23 level for a Band D property. The Panel heard that the income levied would underpin much-needed investment in a number of areas of the service, particularly where the service needs to evolve to keep up with the changing nature of crime. Investment will be made into areas such as the digital forensic unit, expanding the number of detectives, ensuring a uniformed response presence in communities and further investment into the Force Control Room, to help improve the 101 and 999 services.

The Panel were concerned to emphasise that communities will need to be reassured of visible improvements in policing if they are being asked to pay more. The Commissioner highlighted that the Chief Constable will be conducting an organisational and operational review to restructure the organisation and improve delivery of frontline services and that visible neighbourhood policing remains a key commitment. Members noted that 44% of the public who responded to the Commissioner’s consultation had supported an increase of at least £10 and that 62% had supported some level of increase on last year’s levy. Following consideration of all these points, the Panel gave its support to the Commissioner’s proposal to increase the policing precept for 2023/24 to £295.08. The Panel will receive a report on the organisational review during 2023/24.

Fire and Rescue Precept

The Panel considered the Commissioner’s proposal to set the fire and rescue element of the Council Tax precept at £80.61 for 2023/24, which represented a 6.6% increase (or £5) over the 2022/23 level for a Band D property. This was the maximum permissible increase for the service before a referendum would be triggered. The Panel welcomed the flexibility afforded this year to North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to be able to seek up to a £5 increase on a Band D property, following

efforts in the last year by the Commissioner, Panel, local MPs and others to seek greater flexibility. However, it will be key for the Commissioner to continue to lobby for fair funding. The Panel are aware of the increasingly urgent need for investment and renewal for parts of the fire estate and fleet and that this will present a challenge going forward with budget and inflationary uncertainties.

The Panel sought reassurances around the intentions of the Risk and Resource Model; particularly that prevention and protection work, along with the planned investments in On-Call, will still be implemented. Having taken into account all of the above factors and discussion points, the Panel gave its support to the Commissioner's proposal to increase the fire and rescue precept for 2023/24 by £5 for a Band D property.

e) Scrutiny of the performance of the Force Control Room in relation to handling of 101 and 999 calls

The Panel has continued to request an annual update on performance levels in the police Force Control Room (FCR) in relation to the 999 and 101 non-emergency numbers.

At the Panel's review of performance data in February 2023, the Commissioner acknowledged that response times for the 101 and 999 services have been unacceptable and outlined measures put in place to help tackle this, including her staff attending 'Gold' and 'Silver' level police meetings. An investment of £1.9m per year has also been taken forward for the FCR, principally to recruit more staff and ensure greater resilience. The Panel were also advised that improvements to handling are being modelled around the Right Care Right Person initiative as adopted by the force in Humberside.

The Panel considered the issue that a significant number of calls received by the FCR are not for the police to deal with, for example mental health and welfare calls. The Chief Constable acknowledged that there is often a cyclical requirement on the FCR where someone should have been supported by another agency such as mental health services and that a piece of productivity work is underway nationally to examine this further. The Commissioner highlighted the increase in funding for mental health triage in the FCR. She has also raised concerns with the Policing Minister on this matter and will be speaking to the Integrated Care Board soon to look at how the agencies can come together to tackle these difficulties.

A further update report will be taken early in 2024.

f) Review of measures to enhance diversity and inclusivity in the police and fire services

The Panel requested a report on measures to enhance diversity and inclusivity within North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. The Panel were apprised that within the police service, positive action teams are reaching out to communities, there is monitoring and support for diverse members of the workforce and inappropriate behaviour is picked up quickly. For the fire and rescue service, confidential conversations will be held with staff from under-represented groups, to pick up on the lived experience of staff and draw on this to shape how the service gives a greater voice to staff and better understands communities.

Members referred to the fire and rescue service's response to the London Fire Brigade report and asked about mechanisms in place for people to report conduct issues locally. The Chief Fire Officer acknowledged that a lot of work is still needed to ensure staff understand the impact of their conduct and language. The Panel requested further statistics on recruitment for under-represented groups across both services and it was identified that it would also be helpful to have more

information on what actions and improvements the fire service had identified following the London Fire Brigade report.

The Panel will be returning to this issue for an update on progress within the fire service specifically in October 2023.

g) Review of progress against the strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the development of a new Victims' Centre in York

The Panel takes an annual progress report from the Commissioner in relation to the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy published in 2022, which sets out a collective commitment by the Commissioner and other groups and organisations to tackle VAWG. Members discussed with the Commissioner how third sector partners might be best supported to help deliver services as a result of the likely increase in demand flowing from the work in the strategy's Delivery Plan. It is helpful that a number of third sector partners have been included in the strategic oversight arrangements thus far but it was recognised that providing adequate support for the third sector will play a significant role in delivery against the strategy.

The Panel also highlighted the low number of detectives nationally and locally against the high number of sexual offences being reported and questioned the Commissioner as to whether there were sufficient detectives in place to adequately handle this. The Panel were apprised of a resilience action plan which is ensuring that more detectives are being brought into the service and others are also being upskilled.

The Panel were pleased at the headway made by the Commissioner to develop a new Sexual Assault and Rape Victims' Centre (SARC) on the outskirts of York, to house North Yorkshire's Sexual Assault Referral Centre and Child Sexual Assault Assessment Services alongside a Video-Recorded Interview suite for vulnerable victims and witnesses. It is anticipated that the Centre will be open later this year.

The Panel will continue to review progress against the Delivery Plan on an annual basis.

h) Review of progress under the Enable North Yorkshire programme

The EnableNY programme is a formal collaboration which brings together the business support functions for North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service with the aim of driving efficiency and delivering savings that could be re-invested in frontline services. The Panel requested an update on the programme at its informal meeting in March 2023. The Commissioner highlighted that there had been issues embedding the programme correctly and that Covid-19 had disrupted progress but that she has supported an evaluation of relative demand and process efficiency and effectiveness, with proposal due to come to her for a revised approach in April 2023. The Panel expressed disappointment that there was a lack of evidenced savings or benefits outlined from the programme, particularly in view of the collaboration having formed the cornerstone of the business case for transfer of governance of the fire and rescue service in 2018.

The Panel has requested that this issue be brought back for further scrutiny in October 2023.

i) Considering the Commissioner's proposed appointment for Chief Fire Officer

The Panel was required to meet to review the proposed appointment of Mr Jonathan Dyson as Chief Fire Officer – following the retirement of the Interim Chief Fire Officer – in May 2022. Following a confirmation hearing (held in public), the Panel were pleased to recommend Mr Dyson's appointment.

4. Responses to consultations

The Panel has formally responded to the following local/national consultations during the 2022/23 financial year:

- Risk and Resource Model for North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire) – August 2022.
- Fire Reform White Paper (Home Office) – July 2022.

5. Forward Plan – Key Issues for 2023/24

The Panel has a number of issues on the forward work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year, including statutory and non-statutory business such as:

- Consider the efficacy of the Commissioner’s monitoring of progress in both policing and fire services, against the findings of the inspectorate following planned ‘re-visits’ in autumn 2023;
- Scrutinise the performance of the EnableNY programme of service collaboration;
- Review progress on the implementation of the Risk and Resource Model for the fire and rescue service;
- Review and make recommendations on the Commissioner’s draft Annual Reports for Policing and Fire and Rescue 2022/23;
- Review and make recommendations on the Commissioner’s proposed Council Tax precept levels for 2024/25 for both policing and fire and rescue;
- Consider progress made to tackle violence against women and girls;
- Review work being undertaken and planned to tackle hate crime;
- Scrutinise how rural crime is being tackled, including wildlife crime.

6. Development of the Panel

The Panel has continued to seek opportunities for informal briefings, training opportunities and development workshops to help continue members’ awareness of regional and national issues and to enhance their scrutiny role. Panel Members and supporting officers have been involved in the following during 2022/23:

- **Briefings on VAWG** – IDAS provided three remote briefing sessions for the Panel, culminating in April 2022, on the work that they do and to provide further awareness-raising around domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- **Finance Sub-Group** – the Panel continues to make use of informal opportunities to meet remotely with the Commissioner’s Chief Financial Officer, particularly prior to the precept-setting, to gain further insight into the budget position. This group is open to all Panel Members and helps to develop lines of enquiry for Panel meetings. The Sub-Group met in February 2022.
- **Regional Yorkshire and Humber Panel Network** – the Panel subscribes annually to membership of a Member and officer network of Panels in Yorkshire and the Humber. Meetings were held in September 2022 and March 2023; with the former meeting attended by both a Panel Vice Chair and the Panel’s supporting officer.
- **Annual Fire and Rescue Conference 2022** – One of the Panel’s Vice Chairs attended the LGA’s annual Fire Conference in person in March 2023.
- **LGA Annual Panel Conference** – The LGA held its annual workshop for Panel officers, Members and partners as a remote meeting on 27 September 2022. The Panel was represented by both Vice Chairs and the Panel’s supporting officer, who led a presentation and discussion session on how the North Yorkshire Panel has handled some complex

complaint matters. The workshop also included an update from the Home Office and from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

Further induction / familiarisation visits are planned for the Panel in 2022/23, including a visit to the Force Control Room and the Rural Task Force.

7. Complaints handling by the Panel

The Panel has a statutory role to consider non-criminal complaints made regarding the conduct of the Commissioner.

During the financial year 2022/23:

- Three complaints were received by the Panel.
 - One complaint had regard to North Yorkshire Police and as such was not recorded or considered by the Panel but was re-directed as appropriate.
 - One complaint was determined to pertain to the Commissioner's staff and as such was diverted from the Panel and not recorded.
 - One complaint was recorded regarding the Commissioner (October 2022) but was considered by the Panel's Lead Officer to not require any further action.

Further information about the Panel's complaints handling process and complaints publications can be found at <https://nypartnerships.org.uk/pfcpcomplaints>

8. Panel budget for 2022/23

As host authority, North Yorkshire County Council receives an annual grant from the Home Office to support the administration of the Panel. For the 2022/23 financial year the Home Office grant was **£65,260**. The Panel is required to report biannually to the Home Office as to how the grant has been spent, including provision of a performance report against Key Performance Indicators.

North Yorkshire Council submitted a year-end return in May 2023 to claim the full amount of £65,260 for 2022/23.

The Panel also received **£11,428** from Hambleton District Council and City of York Council for the 2022/23 financial year, to contribute towards both administration costs and Member allowances.

For the 2022/23 financial year, North Yorkshire County Council absorbed an estimated **£4,500** in costs for the running of the Panel, in addition to the grant and income received. This represents a reduction of almost 50% on the previous year; this is principally because in 2021/22 there was an increased staffing cost related to the handling of the exceptional level of complaints and additional support work needed for the Panel in October 2021.

North Yorkshire Council anticipates that it will be offered a grant of £65,260 for the 2023/24 financial year by the Home Office. However, the award will not be confirmed until August 2023. The Panel will need to be aware that there will be a loss of discretionary income for 2023/24 owing to the cessation of Hambleton District Council from 1st April 2023. City of York Council is currently also reviewing its contribution to the Panel for 2023/24. There may therefore be a greater amount to be absorbed by the host authority for 2023/24.

The following table highlights actual spend for 2022/23.

Expenditure Breakdown 2022/23 financial year (£)**81,195**

made up of:

Support to the Panel (inc on-costs) Secretariat, Legal, Finance, Business Support & Communications staff	56,262
Printing / Postage / Admin / Meeting costs	970
Subscriptions, training and conferences	770
Panel Member expenses (inc training, Member allowances, expenses)	23,193
Total Expenditure	81,195
Home Office total grant 2021-22	65,260
Income received from City of York and HDC 2021-22	11,428
Total Income Received	76,688
Total overspend incurred by NYCC	4,507

9. Membership

Membership of the Panel during the 2022/23 municipal year was as follows:

Craven District Council	Cllr Eric Jaquin (term ended 31 March)
Hambleton District Council	Cllr Peter Wilkinson (Vice Chair) (term ended 31 March) – re-appointed for North Yorkshire Council 17 May 2023
Harrogate Borough Council	Cllr Mike Chambers MBE (term ended 31 March)
North Yorkshire County Council	Cllr Carl Les (Chair) – re-appointed for North Yorkshire Council 17 May 2023
Richmondshire District Council	Cllr Helen Grant (term ended 31 March)
Ryedale District Council	Cllr Lindsay Burr MBE (term ended 31 March) – re-appointed for North Yorkshire Council 17 May 2023
Scarborough Borough Council	Cllr Carl Maw (term ended 31 March)
Selby District Council	Cllr Tim Grogan (term ended 31 March) – re-appointed for North Yorkshire Council 17 May 2023
City of York Council	Cllr Keith Aspden (Vice Chair) (term ended 5 May)
City of York Council	Cllr Darryl Smalley (term ended 25 May)
Co-opted independent member	Fraser Forsyth
Co-opted independent member	Mags Godderidge
Co-opted independent member	Martin Walker