

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2023 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

PRESENT:

Councillor Janet Emsley	Rochdale Council (Chair)
Councillor Kevin Anderson	Wigan Council
Councillor Dylan Butt	Trafford Council
Councillor Becky Chambers	Manchester City Council
Councillor Vimal Choksi	Tameside Council
Councillor Mudasir Dean	Bolton Council
Councillor Mike Freeman	Trafford Council
Councillor Richard Gold	Bury Council
Councillor Rabiya Jiva	Bolton Council
Councillor David Lancaster	Salford Council
Councillor Tom Morrison	Stockport Council
Councillor Luthfur Rahman	Manchester City Council
Councillor Steve Williams	Oldham Council (Vice-Chair)
Majid Hussain	Independent Member
Angela Lawrence	Independent Member

Also in attendance:

Andy Burnham	GM Mayor
Baroness Beverley Hughes	GM Deputy Mayor
Kate Green	Proposed GM Deputy Mayor
CFO Dave Russel	GMFRS
Deputy CFO Ben Norman	GMFRS
CC Stephen Watson	GMP
DCC Terry Woods	GMP
T/Chief Supt. Richard McNamara	GMP

Officers Present:

Ian Cosh	Director of Finance, GMP
Neil Evans	Strategic Advisor to the Deputy Mayor, GMCA
Kevin Lee	Mayors Office, GMCA

Lisa Lees	Strategic Planning Manager, Police, Fire & Criminal Justice Team, GMCA
Shabnum Mustapha	Assistant Director News & Media, GMCA
Rachel Rosewell	Deputy Treasurer, GMCA
Sarah Scoales	Head of Service Excellence, GMFRS
Kathy Stacey	Head of Strategic Communications, GMP
Jeanette Staley	Advisor to Panel & Head of Community Safety, Resilience & Neighbourhoods, Salford CC
Sandra Stewart	Chief Executive, Tameside Council
Lee Teasdale	Senior Governance & Scrutiny Officer, Governance and Scrutiny, GMCA
Gwynne Williams	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA
Steve Wilson	Treasurer, GMCA

PFCP/01/23 WELCOME, APOLOGIES & CHAIRS ANNOUCEMENTS

Apologies were received from Councillor James Wright (Trafford), Councillor Laura Boyle (Tameside) and Councillor Russell Bernstein (Bury).

RESOLVED/-

1. That the apologies be noted.

PFCP/02/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mike Freeman advised that he was in receipt of a pension from Greater Manchester Police.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the declaration of interest be received.

PFCP/03/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10TH NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED/-

1. That the minutes of the meeting of 10th November 2022 be agreed as a true and correct record.

PFCP/04/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 5th DECEMBER 2022

RESOLVED/-

1. That the minutes of the meeting of 5th December 2022 be agreed as a true and correct record.

**PFCP/05/23 2023/24 PCC BUDGET AND PCC COMPONENT OF THE
MAYORAL PRECEPT**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, was invited to advise Panel members of the proposed PCC budget for 2023/24 including the latest expected budget numbers for Greater Manchester Police and to seek a report from the Panel on the Mayor's proposals for the PCC component of the Mayoral precept for 2023/24.

Mayor Burnham opened by stating that the particular difficulties in budget setting this year were fully understood with the cost-of-living crisis resulting in unprecedented financial pressures being faced by GM residents at present. Due to this, the Mayoral General Precept was being frozen for the forthcoming year. However, there was another consideration to take on board – one of the results of these pressures had been an increased demand for 999 services, and it was vital to ensure that these emergency services were properly funded to minimise risks to residents.

The national uplift programme did not necessarily capture all of the pressure being felt by the police service right now. The context was vitally important – the GM precept was the 9th lowest precept in the country at present and showed that GMP had been prudent in their approach to expenditure. But unprecedented pressure such as expectations around pay awards and a £9.8m increases in energy costs meant that whilst GMP was a much-improved police force from a few years previously, it still had more to achieve and to ensure there was no disruption to this progress – it was vital to ensure that the funding level took into count these pressures.

The Government had acknowledged that they would not be in a position to fully fund policing to meet these pressures and had therefore given dispensation to PCCs to go up to a £15 precept. This was therefore the proposal that the vast majority of PCCs in the country had consulted on.

The Mayor emphasised that if the Panel were minded to approve the proposal – this would not be a case of funding growth at GMP but rather facing, even with a full £15 increase, a need to face up to a challenging efficiencies target – with a total of £16.1m in efficiencies to find during 2023/24. If the precept agreed was lower than £15, this challenge would further increase.

Reference was made to the results arising from the consultation process. A total of 417 responses had been received – and whilst 73.4% of respondents supported the improvement priorities at GMP – 61.63% indicated that they were not in support of any increased funding to allow for this. Whilst this was not an ideal response, it was noted that it was actually an improvement from the previous year which saw over 70% of respondents indicate that way, the low number of responses would also indicate that there was not a significant opposition across the region to the proposals.

The Mayor referenced areas that would be important to address during the coming year. This included the key issue of trust in policing which had been seen to erode in recent years. This included the trust of women in the police, particularly following national scandals at the Metropolitan Police, not least of which was the killing by a serving officer of Sarah Everard. There were also understandable concerns within black communities about fairness and equality in the approach of policing that needed to be overcome.

The Chair thanked the Mayor for his introduction and invited Kate Green, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime to contribute.

The Deputy Mayor welcomed the progress seen at GMP and emphasised that the proposals made to the Panel would allow that progress to further flourish. This would include the further embedding of neighbourhood policing teams; improve the capacity for investigations; and sustaining & improving call handling times. The Deputy Mayor also referred to the consultation results and welcomed the significant support seen for GMPs continued improvement plans.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Mayor for her contribution and opened the floor to comments and questions from Panel Members.

Comments and Questions

- Members enquired whether there were possibilities around the further usage of reserves to plug funding gaps at the present time in lieu of precept increases. It was advised that the plan during 2023/24 was to use £10.5m of earmarked reserves which had been 'played in' to get to the position where £16m more would still be required in efficiencies – all earmarked reserves outside of the general reserve were expected to be deployed by the end of 2025/26. The only uncommitted reserve was the general reserve, which at the moment stood at £14m and was legally required to be held in case the funding gap could not be achieved during 2022/23.
- Some Members acknowledged that whilst this was not an easy decision to make due to the impact on residents' finances – the fact that GMP had achieved and indeed gone beyond their promised level of improvement made it the right choice to make. This progress had been strongly welcomed across the region and this was not the time to cut them short.
- Members agreed that a key next step was improving trust in the police for all residents, and that the ringfencing of neighbourhood policing funding would be a helpful step in the right direction for achieving this – as this would help in improving visibility, engagement, intelligence gathering and demonstrating accountability.
- Members sought assurances that the level of turnover that had been seen at GMP (for example, 4 Chief Superintendents for the City of Manchester Division in 12 months) would now reduce, to bring in stability and consistency that would allow for the proper development of working relationships with political and community leads. Chief Constable Watson sought to provide assurances that whilst there would always be some degree of churn, hard work had taken place to slow the level of turnover considerably. The embedding of senior levels of district commanders in every area was undertaken with the expectation that the position would be held for years not months. There had been some unfortunate circumstances recently in

the City of Manchester position which were beyond the control of GMP and there was a full understanding of the impact this had. The new incumbent City Commander – Chief Superintendent Rick Jackson was very much intended to be in the post for ‘the long haul’.

- Members referenced the police estate – and enquired about efficiencies in terms of usage and energy costs. It was advised that this was being considered as part of GMP’s broader sustainability strategy with consideration being given to placing solar panels on roofs; and ensuring that procurement practices favour the most energy efficient fleets and products.
- Members sought further clarification around discussions that had taken place with government in relation to the deficit and overall financial challenges being faced. The Mayor confirmed he had met with the Home Secretary in late 2022 where he had raised the issue of these pressures, and the level of weight that council tax was being asked to bear, and that he would continue to make this point at regular intervals.
- Members referenced the level of cuts/efficiencies faced by the GMCA during the age of austerity – and asked if stats could be provided confirming exactly how much GMCA has had to bear in terms of real term cuts to funding over the last ten-year period. The Mayor advised that these stats would need to be sought and that they would be made available to Members in due course.
- Members asked if sharing of resources was taking place across public services. The Mayor advised that this was part of the need to further place based working and thinking of localities as one team supporting different elements of services.

The Chair thanked all for their contributions and put the Mayor’s proposed policing precept increase to the vote. Members subsequently voted to **approve** the proposal.

Before drawing the item to a close, the Chair invited Deputy Mayor Kate Green to provide the Panel with an update on procedures around vetting following recent national stories about police officers involved in sexual misconduct. Following the conviction of former MET Police Officer David Carrick for a series of rapes over a sustained period, the Deputy Mayor had asked that an urgent report from GMP on sexual misconduct cases that were ongoing, so that assurances could be provided around the scale faced and the actions that

were being taken. More information would be shared with the panel as this scrutinization continued. Current stats were detailed to Members: 16 officers were currently awaiting hearings in respect of sexual misconduct; and 82 further cases were under investigation. This equalled approximately 1% of the GMP force. As per NPCC requirements, all officers were now being rechecked against the Police National Database and that any previous allegations were being revisited.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Panel agrees that the Mayor's proposal to increase the police precept by £15 per year for a Band D property (£10 for a Band A property) with effect from 1 April 2023 can be issued.
2. That the Panel notes the budget assumptions relating to the budgets for 2023/24, including the proposals for the Community Safety Fund.
3. That the Mayor be asked to confirm exactly how much GMCA has had to bear in terms of real term cuts to funding over the last ten-year period.
4. That the Deputy Mayors update to Members following the recent stories regarding national sexual misconduct be noted, and that a fuller update report on this issue will be brought to a meeting of the Panel in due course.

PFCP/06/23 GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2023/24

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, was invited to inform panel members of the proposed budget for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) for 2023/24 and the updated medium term financial plan. These precept proposals for GMFRS for 2023/24 would form part of the Mayoral general budget and precept proposals report to the GMCA on 10th February.

The Mayor advised Members that as with other areas, the fire service also faced cost pressures in terms of increased energy usage and pay increase issues. As with the police, GMFRS had seen great changes in recent years, and that the organisation was now led from the front with management espousing exactly the right values.

The Mayor reiterated his commitment that GMFRS would not go below 50 pumps as long as he was the Mayor – and there would not be a change to the crewing levels now established across the single pump and two pump stations. There was now a need to set a budget that allowed the fire service to meet the pressures placed upon it and to reach a fair resolution to the current pay issues which acknowledge that firefighters had faced a raw deal in recent years in terms of pay.

CFO Dave Russel advised that a ballot of members on strike action was taking place on Monday 30th January – it was expected that this would result in a strong yes turnout. There was agreement that no strike action would take place ahead of a meeting of the National Joint Council on 8th February, this meeting would be crucial in establishing whether a national fire strike would then subsequently take place.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Panel notes the overall budget proposed for GMFRS.
2. That the Panel notes the use of reserves to support the revenue and capital budget.
3. That the Panel notes the proposed Fire Service capital programme and proposals for funding.
4. That the Panel notes the medium-term financial position for GMFRS covered by the Mayoral precept.

PFCP/07/23 GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE HMICFRS UPDATE AND FORCE PERFORMANCE BRIEF

T/Chief Superintendent Richard McNamara was invited to inform the Panel of the progress made by GMP against HMICFRS inspection scrutiny following the successful exit from special measures in November 2022. Members were also provided with a force performance update summarising the progress made across key measures of policing performance.

999 call demand and speed of response was referenced. The latest statistics for December had the average call response time down to 5 seconds. Non-emergency calls for the same period showed a response time of 1min 16secs. Continued investment took

place into online reporting and automated systems for reporting directly without the need to pick up a phone.

Grade 1 attendance times in December 2022 had reduced to 9mins 48secs, which again was a significant improvement. Continued hard work was put into improving Grade 2 attendance times, with around 50% of incidents being attended within the target time now.

In terms of recorded crimes. In the 12 months to December there had been an increase of 6.4%. This indicated an increasing public confidence in reporting crimes with GMP, knowing that they will be investigated appropriately. There had been a decrease in homicides in the year to date, and continued resources were being placed into combatting the issue of knife crime. Improvements were also highlighted in the successful detection and resolution of neighbourhood crimes.

Work continued around improving stop and searches, including the targeting of 'hot spot' areas for knife crime and robbery offences. Work was taking place with the Violence Reduction Unit and other partners to ensure that officers were in the right place at the right time.

Specific reference was made to Operation Vulcan, and the positive results arising from this in Cheetham Hill, with details of arrests, closure orders and seizures of drugs and counterfeit goods being provided to Members.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Panel notes the update report.

PFCP/08/23 GMFRS MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Deputy CFO Ben Norman and Head of Service Excellence Sarah Scoales (GMFRS) were invited to update the Panel on the progress made against the delivery of the current Annual Delivery Plan between April and September 2022.

The report demonstrated that good progress had been made against the KPIs set out within them.

The Chair welcomed the report and asked that any members feedback questions directly to the officers.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the contents of the paper and the GMFRS Mid-Year Performance Report be noted.

PFCP/09/23 GMFRS CORE PLANS AND STRATEGIES ANIMATION

Deputy CFO Ben Norman (GMFRS) was invited to present a paper that provided an overview of the animation GMFRS had launched setting out its ambitions, core plans and strategies for the next few years to make GM a better place for our communities.

Whilst a number of separate documents had been made available in recent times setting out the individual core plans and strategies, it had been felt that there was something missing that would bring together all of these in a coherent way that really brought it to life for the people of GM. A three-minute video had been created that helped in achieving this. The video was presented to and welcomed by the Panel.

Comments and Questions

It was asked whether the video would be going out to schools as part of the engagement process. It was advised that it could be directed straight to schools.

The Chair asked that any feedback be directed straight to DCFO Norman.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the contents of the report and the animation be received.

PFCP/10/23 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair invited the Vice-Chair Cllr Steve Williams to pay tribute to the outgoing Deputy Mayor Baroness Beverley Hughes. Cllr Williams praised Baroness Hughes' resilience and willingness to take on such a difficult role at a such a tough time. This was a unique role and over the 5-year tenure it was indisputable that both GMP and GMFRS were now in a much better place, in no short part due to Baroness Hughes' assiduous leadership.

PFCP/11/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Panel would take place on Thursday 23rd March at 10:30am