

**GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL  
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2024 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Janet Emsley	Rochdale Council (Chair)
Councillor Aalaina Khan	Bolton Council
Councillor Amy Cowen	Bolton Council
Councillor Richard Gold	Bury Council
Councillor Luthfur Rahman	Manchester City Council
Councillor Dave Arnott	Oldham Council
Councillor Barbara Bentham	Salford Council
Councillor Tom Morrison	Stockport Council
Councillor Vimal Choksi	Tameside Council
Councillor Simon Thomas	Trafford Council
Councillor Dane Anderton	Wigan Council
Majid Hussain	Independent Member

**Also in attendance:**

Andy Burnham	GM Mayor
Kate Green	GM Deputy Mayor

**Officers Present:**

Ian Cosh	Chief Finance Officer, GMP
Lee Rawlinson	Chief Resources Officer, GMP
Chief Supt. Nicola Spragg	GMP
DCC Terry Woods	GMP
CFO Dave Russel	GMFRS
Sarah Scoales	Head of Service Excellence, GMFRS
Tracey Read	Head of Corporate Support, GMFRS
Samantha Stabler	Interim Advisor to Panel & Head of Community Safety, Manchester City Council
Neil Evans	Director of Police, Crime, Fire & Criminal Justice, GMCA
Sandra Stewart	Tameside Council

Lee Teasdale

Senior Governance & Scrutiny Officer,  
Governance and Scrutiny, GMCA

Gwynne Williams

Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA

Steve Wilson

Treasurer, GMCA

## **PFCP/01/24 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Rabiya Jiva (Bolton), Councillor Chris Goodwin (Oldham), Councillor David Lancaster (Salford), Councillor Rosemary Barratt (Stockport), Councillor Rose Thompson (Trafford) and Independent Member Angela Lawrence.

## **PFCP/02/24 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS & URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair opened by paying tribute following the passing of Sir Tony Lloyd. Sir Tony had been the Police & Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester between 2012 and 2017 and throughout his life had fought for the rights of vulnerable and powerless people. His vision as Commissioner had been for all of Greater Manchester to work together to build the safest communities in the country. The Panel held a minutes silence in his memory.

### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the tribute to Sir Tony Lloyd be recorded.

## **PFCP/03/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were received.

## **PFCP/04/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

Members considered the minutes of the previous meeting. Points highlighted included:

- In reference to PFCP 59/23 AM Jim Willmott has advised that the presentation papers need context and that he is happy to arrange a teams presentation on them should members so wish.

- In reference to PFCP 60/23 the Safer Streets funding update had been circulated to members.
- In reference to PFCP 64/23 information pertaining to third party reporting avenues in districts has now been circulated to members.

## **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 be agreed as a true and correct record.

## **PFCP/05/24            2024/25 PCC BUDGET AND PCC COMPONENT OF THE MAYORAL PRECEPT**

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented a report notifying Panel Members of the proposed PCC budget for 2024/25 including the latest expected budget numbers for Greater Manchester Police and to seek a report on the Mayor's proposals for the PCC component of the Mayoral precept for 2024/25. The Mayor highlighted the following points:

- The current budget had been prepared and proposed with a full awareness of the difficulties still being faced by many residents of the region through the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Due to this, the Mayoral General Precept for the year had been frozen. However, due to under inflation increases in government funding, it was deemed necessary to ask for a modest increase in the precepts for Fire & Rescue and Policing.
- The work addressing the damage done to policing numbers over the past 14 years remained an area of concern that required ongoing support. In 2010, GMP had just over 8500 police officers, by the mid-2010's this had fallen by 2000 to approximately 6500. A process to increase these numbers had commenced in 2019 and was supplemented by the national policing uplift programme. Today, there were 1620 extra officers compared to 2019 – at 8160 officers. This was still several hundred away from the number in 2010.
- The policing grant from government announced just ahead of Christmas was a disappointing number, being significantly below inflation, and even if the maximum precept were to be factored in – the increase in funding would only sit at 2.6% - still

significantly below inflation. This would mean that there was still a difficult scenario with a funding gap of circa £40.7m that would still need to be addressed. It was therefore considered that it would be irresponsible of the Mayor to risk jeopardising all the progress made by GMP in recent years by not asking for the full allowable precept and putting that progress at risk with a higher still funding gap.

- The Mayor highlighted the many recent improvements seen at GMP. Particularly since being removed from special measures in 2022. Including the implementation of dedicated neighbourhood policing teams and reductions in numerous crime statistics.
- Specific reference was made to the success of Operation Vulcan in Cheetham Hill which had now been expanded into Piccadilly Gardens – an example of truly proactive root and branch policing.
- Reference was made to the results of the precept consultation process that had taken place throughout January 2024. The response in many ways reflected the financial climate in which this request was being made. 758 responses had been received, with just over a quarter of those responding supportive of the proposals, with 68% saying they did not. It was difficult as, despite this being a very small percentage of GM residents, there was a wish to take into account consultations, as seen in the changes made following the GM Fire Cover Review, but in this instance, the precept would not just be paying for discretionary elements that could be put on hold, this was about minimising the impact of a serious financial burden faced by GMP.

Deputy Mayor Kate Green was then invited to address the Panel with further detail on the pressures faced. Points highlighted included:

- Conversations with other PCC's throughout the country had made it clear that the funding from government appeared to be calculated on the basis that they expected all PCC areas to ask for the maximum allowable precept of £13 per year for a Band D property. It was apparent that nearly all PCC's across the country would be asking for the maximum precept in this year to ensure that local policing did not have to return to a series of harmful cuts.
- It was made clear that whilst a Band D property would see a £13 increase, the majority of households in GM fell into Bands A-C and would see a smaller increase. It was also noted that even with the increase, the region would still have one of the smallest policing precepts in the country.

- Reference was made to the additional policing pressures being faced in the current climate. Including additional resources required due to the rises seen in both antisemitism and islamophobia due to the ongoing crisis in the middle east, and crime related to the cost-of-living crisis including the rise in exploitative gangs looking to take advantage of vulnerable people.
- It was advised that Senior Officers at GMP had been undertaking significant work to see where efficiencies could be found in relation to the £40.7m gap. The work so far had now brought this down to £24m which still needed to be addressed and it was hoped that a balance budget could be brought to the next meeting of the Panel.

### **Comments and Questions**

The Chair then invited Members of the Panel to address their comments and questions to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

- Members referenced neighbourhood policing – stating the absolute need for stability and consistency of personnel – which was a particular issue at present in the City of Manchester. It was stated that this issue was absolutely recognised and that the model, which required deep and meaningful relationships with a locality would not work unless this stability could be offered, and that this was in the process of being addressed in the City of Manchester.
- Members referenced efficiency savings that would be required as part of the £24m gap remaining. Would this result in a recruitment freeze? It was advised that there was a commitment, and indeed an obligation for GMP to retain officer numbers under the terms of the government settlement. Therefore, there was a requirement for officer numbers to be kept above the uplift numbers, and there would absolutely not be any recruitment freeze on serving officers – and the current budget did allow for the recruitment of a further 30 officers on top of the current number.
- Members commended the good work being done within these constrained budgets, stating that this would not be the right time to risk undoing a lot of the progress GMP had made by refusing the precept increase at this time.
- Members stated that whilst it was frustrating to have to commit to increases in precept in the current climate – it was felt that the residents of the region’s

communities would not wish to see services that support community safety compromised through cuts.

- Members reflected further upon the consultation, that whilst a very small sample size, did strongly indicate that an increase was not sought, was the method by which the consultation was carried out the right way in which to 'sell' the need for an increase to the public? The Mayor agreed that the whole process was suboptimal. The government would announce the funding available to police authorities towards the end of December, allowing very little time to draft a consultation based upon that. It was felt that PCC's should come together to call for a reform to the current funding system that was clearly not fit for purpose – and it was considered that the Panel itself could make a recommendation to the next government following the election to look at the principles that underpin the process.
- Members emphasised the importance of preventative measures that stop crime happening in the first place – as the cost of combating crime continued to rise, preventative measures provided a much cheaper solution. The Deputy Mayor agreed, stating that this upstream prevention on tackling the causes of crime was an equally important focus within her work. This was best done in partnership with other organisations. This was why close working took place with community safety partnerships across all ten districts to devise community led solutions. Work took place within crime hotspots to fully understand the root causes of the issues in those neighbourhoods and what needed to be done to address them. The Mayor advised that as part of his plans around the Manchester Baccalaureate – he wished to work with the violence reduction unit to offer accelerated pathways to young people at most risk of being drawn into crime networks.
- Members asked about the future role of PCSO's going forward. It was advised that there had been a number of unfilled posts for some time and that the neighbourhood policing model was investing in more warranted officers due to their additional powers. Importantly there was now a clearer delineation of the warranted officer role and the PCSO role. PCSO's would play an important role in a more clearly community engagement-based position going forward and there was a commitment to ensuring a named PCSO allocated to every ward in GM.

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

**RESOLVED/-**

1. That the Panel notes that the Mayor seeks to increase the police precept by £13 per year for a band D property (£10.11 for a Band B property) with effect from 1 April 2024 and proposes that this precept level can be issued.
2. That the Panel notes the budget assumptions relating to the budgets for 2024/25, including the proposals for the Community Safety Fund.

**PFCP/06/24                    GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2024/25**

Deputy Mayor Kate Green introduced a report that informed panel members of the proposed budget for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) for 2024/25 and the updated medium term financial plan. The precept proposals for GMFRS for 2024/25 would form part of the Mayoral general budget and precept proposals report to the GMCA on 9th February 2024. Points highlighted included:

- It was advised that the Mayor would be seeking approval for a £5 per year increase in the Fire Authority budget at the GMCA meeting due to take place on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February.
- The fire service had been performing well over the last few years and it was important to continue to invest in that continued performance.
- It was noted that CFO Dave Russel had received the King's Fire Service Medal in the New Year's Honours list which was a clear indication of the successful progress at GMFRS under his leadership.
- The £5 increase would allow for the investment in a 52<sup>nd</sup> pump for the region and to release funds for other preventatives and protective programmes.
- Additionally the Fire Service was put under further pressure by the increases in climate related call outs – such as the significant increase in wildfires being seen.
- There was also a need for continued capital investment in the fire estate. Bury Training College was now fully open and there were plans to modernise a number of stations that were no longer deemed fit for purpose.

CFO Russel commented, reiterating the importance of investment, as this would allow for more prevention, more protection and to provide an overall better emergency response service.

## **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the Panel notes the following:

- The overall budget proposed for GMFRS
- The proposed £5 increase in the level of the Mayoral fire precept to fund cost pressures and investment in front line services including a 52<sup>nd</sup> fire engine for GM to £81.20 for a Band D property.
- The use of reserves to support the revenue and capital budgets
- The proposed fire service capital programme and proposals for funding
- The medium-term financial position for GMFRS covered by the Mayoral precept

## **PFCP/07/24            GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE – FORCE PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

Deputy Chief Constable Terry Woods presented a report providing the Board with an executive summary describing the performance of GMP over the most recent year to December 2023, and how this compared to performance in the previous year.

- The investments in phone call response time had been used to good effect. With continuing improvements in this area.
- Officer response time to incidents continued to improve. When public need was at it's highest this was vital. The national target was set at 15 minutes, and the GMP average was now under 10 minutes.
- More proactive policing was now being carried out, a lot of which was only able to be done due to the extra funding previously agreed for specialist operations, road policing, tactical aid units and neighbourhood policing.
- An example of this was the 74% increase in the number of stop and searches carried out during 2023.

- There had been a 24% reduction in the number of victims of domestic burglary in GM during 2023 – part of an overall 3% reduction in recorded crime over the year – which resulted in 11,000 fewer victims.
- There had also been a significant drop in the number of road deaths seen in the region. Numbers of officers dedicated to road policing had been doubled and it had also been made a key priority within neighbourhood teams – this had resulted in 20 fewer people being killed in 2023 – a 31% reduction. 11,000 uninsured vehicles had also been seized during this period.
- However, there were still some areas where increases had been seen, and work was taking place to address these, including robbery from a person and shoplifting.

## **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the contents of the report be noted.

## **PFCP 08/24                    GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE – MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT APRIL-OCTOBER 2023**

Sarah Scoales (Head of Service Excellence, GMFRS) presented a report to Panel highlighting the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) mid-year performance review. The report identified the progress made against the delivery of the current Annual Delivery Plan between April and September 2023. Points highlighted included:

- Overall, the portfolio was making good progress, with just some delays highlighted around digital solutions for planning projects and performance. Monitoring of all areas would continue through the internal governance processes.
- The average response time to risks had increased slightly – currently at 7mins 35secs against a target of 7mins 30secs. The main driver of this increase had been ‘special service calls’ rather than fires (which remained just under 7mins) – so work was taking place on call handling procedures for special service calls. It was considered that these types of calls may be segmented in future KPIs to provide an extra level of clarity.
- Accidental fires in the home had seen a slight increase – largely down to cooking related incidents but also an emerging theme around E-Bikes and E-Scooters. So a

number of campaigns and local initiatives had taken place for extra education on how to appropriately charge these.

**RESOLVED/-**

1. That the contents of the paper and the GMFRS Mid-Year Performance report found at Appendix A be noted.