

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2026 IN EXCHANGE ROOMS 8-10,
MANCHESTER CENTRAL CONVENTION COMPLEX

PRESENT:

Councillor Janet Emsley	Rochdale Council (Chair)
Councillor Rabiya Jiva	Bolton Council
Councillor Robin Garrido	Bolton Council
Councillor Sandra Walmsley	Bury Council
Councillor James Gartside	Rochdale Council
Councillor Shaun O'Neill	Rochdale Council
Councillor Barbara Bentham	Salford Council
Councillor Dan Oliver	Stockport Council
Councillor Jacqueline Owen	Tameside Council
Councillor Rose Thompson	Trafford Council
Stephen Williams	Independent Member
Duncan Craig	Independent Member

Also in attendance:

Andy Burnham	GM Mayor
Kate Green	GM Deputy Mayor

Officers Present:

DCC Terry Woods	GMP
Ian Cosh	Chief Finance Officer, GMP
CFO Dave Russel	GMFRS
Jeanette Staley	Advisor to Panel & Head of Community Safety, Salford City Council
Neil Evans	Director of Police, Crime, Fire & Criminal Justice, GMCA
Vicky Sugars	Assistant Director of Police, Crime, Fire & Criminal Justice, GMCA
Lynne Ridsdale	Chief Executive, Bury Council
Lee Teasdale	Senior Governance & Scrutiny Officer, Governance and Scrutiny, GMCA
Melinda Edwards	Deputy Monitoring Officer, GMCA

Steve Wilson
Jerome Francis

Group Treasurer, GMCA
Head of Finance – Management Accounts, GMCA

PFCP/01/26 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Garry Bridges (Manchester), Councillor Rabnawaz Akbar (Manchester), Councillor Richard Kilpatrick (Manchester), Councillor Kevin Anderson (Wigan), Councillor Stephen Homer (Tameside) and Independent Member Tony Gordon.

PFCP/02/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

PFCP/03/26 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 17TH NOVEMBER 2025

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of 17th November 2025.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2025 be agreed as a true and correct record.

PFCP/04/26 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS & URGENT BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Kate Green and DCC Terry Woods were invited to provide Members with an update following the Home Office's announcement of the police reform white paper on Monday 26th January.

The white paper made a number of far-reaching proposals that would have a significant impact on police forces across the country and followed on from the late 2025 announcement on the abolition of Police and Crime Commissioner posts. Whilst legislation on the reform was expected in the summer, the actual changes were expected to take place over quite a protracted length of time, with a number taking place beyond the term of the current parliament, to enable full implementation.

At the heart of the proposals was responding to the wants and needs of local populations and keep up with emerging trends around crime and the way crimes can be tackled. It was also intended that the reform would enhance confidence amongst the public that standards of performance were being set and adhered, and that the public could judge this performance transparently.

One of the proposals was for a British Police Force, described by the Home Secretary as a 'British FBI', this would have a number of functions including setting standards for policing, bringing support services into the ambit of the police service, and in the longer term other functions, such as that of the National Crime Agency, counter terrorist police and serious and organised crime. This would be headed up by a national police commissioner.

A key part of the proposals was to reduce the number of territorial forces within England. It was widely recognised that the current number saw real disparity in size and capacity across different forces, and whilst the white paper did not indicate the 'optimal' size, it was expected that there would be a number of mergers at the more sub-regional level. Whatever the eventual model was, it was expected that GMP would remain in a strong prominent position, and it was made clear that the current co-terminus model in the region was very beneficial.

DCC Terry Woods stated that GMP broadly supported the initial reforms within the white paper, and the benefits around larger forces for capability and capacity was agreed. GMP welcomed re-looking at the funding model, which currently had a disproportionately negative impact upon lower tax bases.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the update on the police reform white paper be noted.

PFCP/05/26 2026/27 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 2026/27 including the latest expected budget numbers for Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and to seek a report on the Mayor's

proposals for the PCC component of the Mayoral precept for 2026/27. The Mayor highlighted the following points:

- The proposed increase was for £15 per annum for a band D property, but this would equate to a £11.67 per annum increase for the vast majority of residents in the region with 80% living in property bands A-C. However, the proposal was not made lightly in a time when it was known residents still had tightening budgets and had to be fully justified.
- It was advised that this year, the Government's decision to mainstream Police Officer Uplift grant funding had disproportionately impacted forces like GMP which went above and beyond to recruit more officers in line with government requests and national targets to compensate for forces which chose not to. This decision had resulted in GMP having officers without the funding, whilst forces like the Metropolitan police force in London now had funding without the officers.
- The police precept set in Greater Manchester was one of the lowest in the country. The policing grant from central government had increased from £649m to £669m providing a 3.1% increase in policing grant to Greater Manchester for the coming year. This was less than the average grant increase of 3.8% for England and Wales.
- In total cash terms, including precept income, Greater Manchester had received a 3.9% increase as part of the settlement, including its portion of the recently announced additional £50m for neighbourhood policing. The settlement remained below the national average and was the second worst settlement nationally.
- In terms of GMP performance it was highlighted that neighbourhood crime continued to fall with a 15% reduction in the past year, 95% of grade 1 emergencies being responded to within 15 minutes & 76% of non-emergencies within the hour and confidence and trust in police increasing to 65%.
- In terms of diversionary work - Operation Vulcan continued to be a success with significant decreases in crime in the areas where it was operational. In the past year the Operation had been active in Derker (Oldham) and had made an appreciable difference on crime and anti-social behaviour which had been welcomed locally.
- It was always important to ensure that preventative actions were at the forefront of work taking place, and to divert young people from anti-social behaviour. The past year had seen a 50% increase in diversionary work as an alternative to arrest, and the work of the Violence Reduction Unit around this was commended.

- Reference was made to the additional pressures being faced by GMP as the region continued to rise in profile and had essentially become a 'gathering place of the north' in terms of positives such as the Brit Awards coming to Manchester but also negatives such as increased protest marches responding to national and international events. It was suggested that there was a very good argument for the force to receive additional funding in light of these pressures, such as those received by the Met Police.
- The response to the Heaton Park Synagogue Attack in October 2026 had really showed the best of GMP and GMFRS in their ability to respond to marauding terrorist attacks and the reassurance work that had taken place with the affected communities subsequently.
- It was noted that there had been 964 responses to the on-line consultation. This was significantly higher than last year when we received 572 responses. 47.51% of responses support the proposed increase (of £15 per year for a Band D property and £11.67 for a Band B property) and 52.49% did not support the proposed increase. By comparison, last year 31.35% supported the increase and 67.60% did not support the proposed increase.
- There was a £32m budget gap in GMP's finances going into the new financial year which would require some difficult bridging. There were some reserves that could be utilised, but it would undoubtedly put pressure upon GMP's efficiency programme (Operation Rydal).
- The Mayor stated the importance of ensuring conditionality within the precept ask. In previous years this had included improving call-centre times, improving officer numbers, and last year introducing TravelSafe Live Chat. The Mayor reflected on how the TravelSafe function was now being successfully introduced with a significant number of positive outcomes already being seen.
- The Mayor stated that this year his specific ask would be around the heart of the city centre, specifically Piccadilly Gardens. There had been attempts in recent times, to portray this part of Manchester in a certain way through social media channels looking to encourage and film such action for viewer engagement. However, it could not be denied that there was a definite feeling amongst the public that this area was not as safe as it should be for such a key central location. Work was taking place with Manchester City Council on changing the physical layout of Piccadilly Gardens, and the plan was for GMP to also have a permanent 'hub' and physical presence within the Gardens.

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

- Members were reminded that when the government announce the final national police funding settlement figures, there is a built-in assumption that PCCs and Mayors will take full advantage of the precept flexibility available to them. Due to this, all government targets were set based on an assumption that there will have been a precept increase of £15.
- It was hoped that details would also be received very soon around the funding for the Violence Reduction Unit – which helped to fund community diversionary work with young people, to help them avoid harm, and exploitation which could see them drawn into criminal activity.

Deputy Chief Constable Terry Woods was then invited to provide some further emphasis to the issues raised through the Mayor and Deputy Mayor:

- It was stated that whilst the funding gap was an issue, GMP would retain the traditional that has served well in the previous five years of making use of the precept funding for specific activities rather than just ‘closing gaps’ in funding.
- GMP sought to be realistic about the financial envelope and there was a full understanding that many public sector partners were in similar positions on finances. Robust business planning processes were in place, but the settlement from government was considerably smaller than ever expected.

Comments and Questions

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

- Members expressed disappointment that some metropolitan police areas were seeing funding reductions in favour of areas traditionally seen as lower crime areas. It was advised that the police uplift programme had in the past been given to forces that had taken advantage of the programme, this year the funding formula had been changed so that all forces were given the additional funding regardless of whether they had funded extra officers, which impacted upon Greater Manchester. It was not

fully understood why this was the case and the issue was being raised with the Home Office.

- Members expressed concern that the funding gap was higher than the previous year. Was this likely to be a continuing trend? The Deputy Mayor emphasised the hard work that GMP had put into driving efficiencies over the past 12 months through Operation Rydal, but as previously stated the funding settlement for the forthcoming year had been unexpectedly low. A range of further budgetary measures were being put in place so that GMP could come back to the March meeting of the Panel to show a balanced budget entering the new financial year.
- It was asked if there was absolute assurance that savings and efficiencies were being made in the right places. It was advised that Operation Rydal was absolutely rigorous in taking a 'line by line, penny by penny' approach to scrutinising expenditure and challenging the senior leadership team on the necessity of each part of this expenditure.
- Members sought assurance that the right level of 'horizon scanning' was taking place to provide sufficient knowledge and preparedness for extra pressures that the force may face. It was stated that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had absolute confidence in GMP's proactive horizon scanning and ability to anticipate and respond to a changing landscape, for example work on the policing of increased protest activity. The force was also very alive to the opportunities afforded by developments in technology.
- Members expressed concern that whilst they supported the neighbourhood policing model, there were questions around sustainability, with some areas seeing a high turnover of staff which led to some community concern that there was not a consistent level of local knowledge being developed. The Deputy Mayor agreed that this was a challenge, whilst officers progressing and working towards promotion in their careers was encouraged, building local relationships was absolutely fundamental and a balance needed to be found. DCC Terry Woods stated that further investments into neighbourhood policing meant that there were now around 1000 officers working in this area across GM and the need for consistency was fully understood.

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.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Panel notes that the Mayor proposes to increase the police precept by £15 per year for a Band D property (£11.67 for a Band B property) with effect from 1 April 2026 and **proposes that the precept level can be issued.**
2. That the Panel notes the budget assumptions relating to the budgets for 2026/27.

PFCP/06/26 GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2026/27

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester & Kate Green, Deputy Mayor for Safer & Stronger Communities introduced a report that informed panel members of the proposed budget for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) for 2026/27 and the updated medium term financial plan. The precept proposals for GMFRS for 2026/27 would form part of the Mayoral general budget and precept proposals report to the GMCA on 13th February 2026. Points highlighted included:

- It was advised that the Mayor would be seeking approval for a £6 per year (for a Band D property, £4 for Band A) increase in the Fire Authority budget at the GMCA meeting due to take place on Friday 13th February.
- The fire service had seen significant improvements under the leadership of CFO Dave Russel, and in the last few years support had been sought to expand the number of frontline resources and pumps, which was counter to the direction of travel in the rest of the country.
- This commitment had now seen a 52nd pump recently opened at Moss Side.
- Tribute was paid to firefighters who were some of the first to attend the terrorist attack at Heaton Park synagogue on 2nd October 2025. It was expressed that this validated the decision to provide all firefighters with marauding terrorist attack training.

CFO Dave Russel was invited to comment and highlighted the following:

- It was stated that the multi-year settlement received from government this year had been very positive news and was the first time in a decade that such a settlement had been received.
- Very strong governance and scrutiny arrangements were in place for all GMFRS spend.
- The last five years had seen considerable investment in the service, and thanks were expressed to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for their foresight on this.

Comments and Questions

- Members noted the moral change seen at GMFRS in recent years and strongly welcomed these developments.
- Members asked that if further funding was made available, what would it be used for. It was advised that it would be used on the capital programme to go further and faster to update an aging estate. The Mayor agreed with this, stating that this needed to be accelerated in the coming years.
- Members asked if there was confidence that GMFRS had adequate training and resources to deal with incidents in the increasing number of high-rise buildings in the region. It was stated that the built environment, particularly in terms of cladding and remediation, was still a challenge. But there was confidence that the plans in place around this were robust and appropriate.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the Panel notes the following:

- The overall budget proposed for GMFRS.
- The proposed £6 increase in the level of the Mayoral fire precept to fund cost pressures.
- 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/07/26 GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE – FORCE PERFORMANCE
UPDATE**

DCC Terry Woods presented a report providing the Board with an executive summary describing the performance of GMP over the most recent year to December 2025, and how this compares to our performance in the previous year.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the contents of the report be noted.

**PFCP/08/26 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR APRIL 2024 –
MARCH 2025**

Deputy Mayor Kate Green presented a report providing the Board with an executive summary describing the performance of GMP over the most recent year to December 2025, and how this compares to our performance in the previous year.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the contents of the report be noted.

PFCP 08/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED/-

1. That the next meeting of the Panel would take place on Monday 16th March 2026.