

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

A meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel will be held at the Jeffrey Room, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton NN1 1DE on Thursday 30 November 2023 at 12.30 pm

Agenda

1.	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members
2.	Notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting Any requests to speak on an item on the agenda should be notified to the Chair (c/o the Committee Manager) by 12 noon two working days before the date of the meeting.
3.	Declarations of Interest Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
4.	Chair's Announcements To receive communications from the Chair.
5.	Minutes To confirm the minutes of previous Panel meetings.
a)	Minutes of the Panel meeting held in public on 15 June 2023 (Pages 5 - 14)
b)	Minutes of the Confirmation Hearing held in public on 27 July 2023 (Pages 15 - 24)
c)	Minutes of the Confirmation Hearing held in private on 27 July 2023 (Pages 25 - 26)
d)	Minutes of the Confirmation Hearing held in public on 14 August 2023 (Pages 27 - 32)
e)	Minutes of the Confirmation Hearing held in private on 14 August 2023 (Pages 33 - 34)
f)	Minutes of the Panel meeting held in public on 7 September 2023 (Pages 35 - 54)

SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

6.	<p>Response to recommendations by the Panel resulting from scrutiny of decisions by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner connected with the appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer (Pages 55 - 62)</p> <p>Guide time: 12.45 – 1.15 pm</p>
7.	<p>Joint Independent Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23 (Pages 63 - 80)</p> <p>Guide time: 1.15 – 1.45 pm</p>
8.	<p>Northamptonshire Police – Acting Chief Constable arrangements (Pages 81 - 84)</p> <p>Guide time: 1.45 – 2.00 pm</p>
9.	<p>Police, Fire and Crime Plan Delivery Update (Pages 85 - 128)</p> <p>Guide time: 2.00 – 2.30 pm</p>
10.	<p>Fire and Rescue Authority Finance Update (Pages 129 - 134)</p> <p>Guide time: 2.30 – 2.45 pm</p>
11.	<p>Policing Finance Update (Pages 135 - 142)</p> <p>Guide time: 2.45 – 3.00 pm</p>

PANEL OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

12.	<p>Police, Fire and Crime Panel Work Programme (Pages 143 - 150)</p> <p>Guide time: 3.00 – 3.15 pm</p>
13.	<p>Complaints and Conduct Matters Update (Pages 151 - 156)</p> <p>Guide time: 3.15 – 3.30 pm</p>
14.	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.</p>
15.	<p>Exclusion of Press and Public</p> <p>In respect of the following items the Chairman may move the resolution set out below, on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information (information regarded as private for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972) would be disclosed to them: The Committee is requested to resolve: “That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act of the descriptions against each item would be disclosed to them”</p>

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
22 November 2023

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Members:

Councillor David Smith (Chair)	Councillor Gill Mercer (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiona Baker	Councillor Jon-Paul Carr
Councillor André González De Savage	Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
Councillor Zoe McGhee	Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Russell Roberts	Councillor Winston Strachan
Mrs Anita Shields	Miss Pauline Woodhouse

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence and the appointment of substitute Members should be notified to democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 3 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare that fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Evacuation Procedure

If a continuous fire alarm sounds you must evacuate the building via the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the assembly area as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

Access to Meetings

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

If you have any queries about this agenda please contact James Edmunds, Democratic Services, via the following:

Tel: 07500 605276

Email: democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk

Or by writing to:

West Northamptonshire Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Street
Northampton
NN1 1DE

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel held at Jeffrey Room, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton NN1 1DE on Thursday 15 June 2023 at 1.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor David Smith (Chair)
 Councillor Gill Mercer (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor André González De Savage
 Councillor Fiona Baker
 Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
 Councillor Winston Strachan
 Mrs Anita Shields
 Miss Pauline Woodhouse

Also Present:

James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager
 Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer
 Stephen Mold, Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
 Deborah Denton, Joint Head of Communications, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
 Helen King, Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
 Nicci Marzec, Director for Early Intervention, Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
 Stuart McCartney, Governance and Accountability Manager, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Jon-Paul Carr
 Councillor Russell Roberts
 Councillor Ken Pritchard

145. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Carr, Pritchard and Roberts.

146. Appointment of the Panel Chair for 2023/24

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager invited nominations for the Chair of the Panel for 2023/24. Councillor Smith was proposed and seconded by Councillors Mercer and Maxwell respectively. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED that: Councillor David Smith be appointed as Chair of the Panel for 2023/24.

147. Appointment of the Panel Deputy Chair for 2023/24

The Chair invited nominations for the Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2023/24. Councillor Mercer was proposed and seconded by Mrs Shields and Councillor Maxwell respectively. There were no further nominations.

Councillor González De Savage expressed thanks to Councillor Mercer for her work as Chair of the Panel for many years and with the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels. Her appointment as Deputy Chair would provide continuity. Councillor Mercer thanked González De Savage for his support as the previous Deputy Chair.

RESOLVED that: Councillor Mercer be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2023/24.

148. **Notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting**

None received.

149. **Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

150. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair thanked members for their support in appointing him to the position and welcomed Councillor Baker to the Panel.

The Chair asked the Panel to agree to change the start time for future meetings to 12.30pm, which would assist him to manage other commitments.

Some Panel members not from West Northamptonshire Council expressed concern regarding their ability to access the meeting room. The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that this could be followed up to identify the most straightforward way to enable Panel members to get access to the meeting rooms at The Guildhall in future.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel agreed that the start time for future Panel meetings be changed to 12.30pm.
- b) The Panel requested that arrangements be made to make it easier for Panel members not from West Northamptonshire Council to access The Guildhall for Panel meetings.

151. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the Police, Fire & Crime Panel meeting held on 20 April 2023 be approved.

152. **Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement for 2022/23**

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) presented the Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement for 2022/23, highlighting the following points:

- This was the first combined report covering both the PFCC's policing and Fire and Rescue functions, which reflected the importance of collaboration between the two service areas.
- The Annual Report highlighted the breadth of the PFCC's responsibilities, the range of work being done in Northamptonshire and the improvements this had produced.
- Northamptonshire Police now had its highest ever number of police officers and neighbourhood and response team officers were spending almost 66 per cent of their time in the community.
- Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) had been supported to recruit more fire officers and to update equipment. HMICFRS had recognised improving performance but there was no complacency about the need to make further progress.
- Since 2020 the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) had secured over £3m in external funding to support community safety, with a particular focus on violence against women and girls. The OPFCC also continued to take an innovative approach to early intervention. He was confident that investment in crime prevention was worthwhile, which was reinforced by recent favourable comparisons between crime rates in Northamptonshire and other force areas.
- The work of the Local Criminal Justice Board contributed to addressing challenges facing the criminal justice system whilst also helping Northamptonshire Police to be one of the best-performing forces in the country on positive outcome rates.
- The OPFCC Customer Service team was nationally recognised and was able to respond effectively to annual increases in the number of complaints, including excessive demand created by some vexatious complainants, and to provide information that assisted the PFCC to hold to account the two service chiefs.
- He would continue to make a case to the government that the funding provided to Northamptonshire did not fairly reflect local challenges and growth. In the meantime, he was proud of what had been done in the past year and would continue to work towards the aim of making Northamptonshire safer.

The Panel considered the Annual Report and questioned the PFCC about the position it presented with regard to progress towards meeting objectives set out in the Police, Fire and Crime Plan and the assurance of compliance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework it gave.

A Panel member challenged the PFCC whether more could be done in the county to support road safety. The PFCC drew attention to the amount of existing activity, highlighting the creation of the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance; his involvement in a forthcoming road safety summit with East Midlands counterparts to share best practice; and the use of the levy from speed awareness courses to fund road safety schemes and cameras in the community.

Panel members referred to the level of concern in the community about increasing violence against women and girls and raised the following points:

- The PFCC was questioned as to whether he was confident that sufficient resources were being put into work on this issue and whether everyone who might benefit from support services was engaging with them.
- Around 24 per cent of the total referrals to the Voice adult service in 2022/23 concerned domestic abuse, which suggested that work on this issue in Northamptonshire was not having sufficient impact. Further information was sought about how many cases involved repeat or prolific offenders.
- Reassurance was sought about how victims of domestic abuse were supported in cases where the perpetrator was a police or fire officer, particularly in the context of national issues with the organisational culture in both service areas.
- Spiking was an example of a new threat that needed to be addressed effectively and further information was sought about how the PFCC planned to do this in Northamptonshire.

The PFCC made the following points:

- He was passionate about addressing the issue of violence against women and girls. The priority he put on it had driven a range of activity by the OPFCC and the force such as initiatives focussed on improving safety in the night-time economy and Operation Kayak to disrupt predatory behaviour. The introduction of a second Safer Nights Out (SNO) Van in summer 2023 in North Northamptonshire was another example.
- He was willing to listen to any feedback that could help to improve local services further.
- He had a related concern about the effect of delays in the criminal justice system. Delays resulting from a backlog of cases could cause victims and witnesses to withdraw if they lost confidence in the system or felt unable to move on with their life. He continued to lobby national government on this issue as well as committing extra resources for the support that Voice provided to witnesses.
- Reducing repeat offending was a priority for Northamptonshire Police whilst police forces in general now responded far more proactively to domestic abuse incidents than had been the case in the relatively recent past.
- He considered that Northamptonshire was still at a point where an increasing trend in domestic abuse reports was a positive sign that victims felt able to come forward.
- He had previously not been satisfied with the independent support provided to victims of domestic abuse in cases where the perpetrator was a police or fire officer and had sought assurances that referrals were going to Voice.
- The Panel should be reassured by local work on organisational culture and standards in policing being carried out as part of Operation Admiral. The force had put in place a team with enough resources to identify issues and support action to address them. He took confidence that incidents reported by police officers indicated that they would call out unacceptable behaviour when it occurred.
- A data wash of force staff members, survey work on perceptions of public safety, and a further HMICFRS inspection in late 2023 would all help to inform future action.
- Both the force and NFRS were on a journey in relation to organisational culture; the force was further forward as it had started earlier.

The Director for Early Intervention provided additional information as follows:

- The support that Voice was able to provide to victims of crime did rely on them engaging with the service.
- In addition to Voice, the Early Intervention team was able to respond quickly to cases of domestic abuse where there were children in the home and to provide direct support as well as help families to get access to other services that could improve their overall situation.

A Panel member noted that the Annual Report stated that 40.3 per cent of detainees held in custody centres in Northamptonshire in 2022/23 had a mental health condition. This illustrated the importance of the Right Care Right Person model and further information was sought about plans to implement the model in Northamptonshire. The PFCC made the following points:

- Right Care Right Person should be implemented in summer 2023 and so would feature more in the next Annual Report.
- Mental health support was ultimately not a core function of the police and the Metropolitan Police had recently announced plans to change how it responded to mental health incidents.
- Right Care Right Person was intended to represent a considered response to challenging issues. However, support for mental health was an area that required a partnership approach.

A Panel member emphasised that the recent fatal stabbing of two young people in Northampton reinforced the importance of effective early intervention activity and questioned whether the PFCC was taking action to understand and address any reluctance amongst members of the public to contact services or other possible barriers to engagement. The PFCC made the following points:

- The OPFCC and partners continued to look at how well different organisations worked together on early intervention and how they shared intelligence about risks.
- Services needed to be informed about cultural differences in the communities they served. As an example, Northamptonshire had a growing East European population and recruits from this group who had joined the force would help it to understand attitudes and perceptions that could influence engagement. Ultimately, the force needed to be able to serve the whole of the community.

The Chair advised that the Panel had received a question from a member of the public concerning the PFCC's position on the illegal or anti-social use of e-scooters and bicycles, given the dangers to pedestrians that could result. The Chair had agreed to raise this at the meeting. The PFCC made the following points in response:

- He acknowledged that e-scooters had been involved in incidents that had caused deaths or life-changing injuries.
- The government needed to take action to clarify the law relating to the use of e-scooters to help to avoid misconceptions amongst members of the public. However, he also expected Northamptonshire Police to enforce the law as it currently stood. If members of the public saw examples of this not being done they should report them via the PFCC's complaints process.

- E-scooters and e-bicycles could make a positive contribution to greener travel but this needed the right infrastructure such as separate cycle paths.

Panel members commented further about the need to address the risks arising from unsafe or irresponsible use of e-scooters by young people. The PFCC noted that young people were encouraged to do bike safety training and to wear a helmet when cycling and questioned why this should not also apply to using an e-scooter. There was a place for e-scooters but their use should be based on appropriate regulation.

A Panel member challenged the PFCC about the cost-effectiveness of his decision not to proceed with the project to develop a new fleet workshop for the force and NFRS at Earls Barton, highlighting the following points:

- The building intended for this facility had been purchased for £3.3m and had stood empty for several years.
- It had been reported that the PFCC had spent £660,00 on VAT, £187,500 on stamp duty and £525,000 on design work for the planned new facility and that the building was now being advertised for sale at £3.5m. This would represent a loss of around £1m in public money.

The PFCC made the following points:

- The building in Earls Barton had been purchased as part of the business case to develop a combined fleet workshop at a cost of £10m. He had decided not to proceed with the original business case after the projected cost increased to £17m due to inflation. He was still committed to delivering a combined fleet workshop but this needed to be done at an affordable cost.
- VAT could be reclaimed and the design work undertaken so far would still produce a benefit. The small loss from stamp duty was not comparable to the cost of proceeding with the original project.
- He had taken a pragmatic decision on this matter about how best to use public money.

A Panel member noted that data included in the Annual Report on NFRS performance against its Community Outcome Measures showed that staff sickness had increased in 2022/23 compared to the previous year. The PFCC was questioned about his level of concern at this trend, whether the causes of it were sufficiently understood and whether increases in the number of primary and secondary fires in Northamptonshire in 2022/23 were connected with lower staff availability. The PFCC made the following points:

- The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant ongoing impact on the NFRS workforce. However, overall staff sickness numbers were still relatively modest and headline data could be affected by a small number of cases. He believed that the staff sickness rate had peaked and was now reducing.
- The overall position on staff sickness was continually monitored through the Fire Accountability Board and he was confident that there was a good understanding of it.
- He was confident that the increased number of fires in Northamptonshire in 2022/23 was not related to staff sickness.

A Panel member noted that the retail crime investigator pilot scheme that had operated in North Northamptonshire in 2022/23 had increased the number of shoplifters charged with criminal offences but questioned the impact of cases where there was not a charge. The PFCC responded that the pilot scheme provided additional capacity that could be used to build better cases against perpetrators. When an individual was suspected of multiple offences the force might not be in a position to proceed with a charge on all of them, but securing a conviction was still beneficial.

A Panel member highlighted the risk represented by the comment in the Fire and Rescue Statement that 2022/23 internal audit work on the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority had not yet been concluded. The Chief Finance Officer provided additional information in response as follows:

- Sufficient progress had been made to enable the internal auditor to reach a conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment. The internal auditor would not do this lightly.
- The internal auditor had issued a 'good' rating, which showed significant progress from the previous 'satisfactory' rating.

The PFCC made the following additional points in response to other questions raised during the course of discussion:

- The OPFCC was seeking clarification from the Home Office regarding how the 'immediate justice' scheme due to be piloted in Northamptonshire would operate and he could update the Panel in future. He was determined that funding to be provided to Northamptonshire would be used to best effect.
- A new fleet workshop in the county was likely to be in a relatively central location.
- A range of work was already done to raise awareness of the risks and impact of fire. At the same time, the number of fires occurring in the county at any time could be affected by various factors, including hot weather or cases where an individual was responsible for multiple fires. This was another area in which prevention, education and community engagement played an important role.

The Panel considered its conclusions on the Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement and members were reminded of guidance about good practice. Panel members made the following points during the course of discussion:

- The Annual Report demonstrated a significant amount of good work was being done.
- High performance by Northamptonshire Police should be recognised but there was no room for complacency. There seemed to be good oversight and understanding of the force's performance, the issues it faced and the trajectory it was on.
- NFRS was also working to develop and improve.
- Increased recruitment to both services would help them to reflect the communities they served in the county.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel recognises areas of performance in which Northamptonshire Police is the leading force in the country.

- b) The Panel is satisfied that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has a good understanding of the trajectory of Northamptonshire Police's performance and issues affecting this.
- c) The Panel recognises the commitment of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service to improving its performance and operation where necessary.
- d) The Panel recognises progress with recruitment to Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service that will help to make both services more reflective of the communities they serve.
- e) The Panel commends the Annual Report 2022/23 and the range of good work done by all concerned that it reflects.

153. **Police, Fire and Crime Panel Work Programme 2023/24 and operating arrangements**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager presented the report, highlighting the following points:

- The Panel's work programme should be considered at the first regular meeting of the new municipal year. In addition to the mandatory tasks, the Panel should identify the topics that the Panel wished to scrutinise and the method for carrying out those tasks. That could include information gathering, briefing sessions and identifying additional training requirements.
- The Panel was invited to consider the proposed outline work programme, which had incorporated previous working methods and tasks identified by the previous Panel, and the Panel's statutory functions.

The Panel considered the report and members made the following points:

- Councillor Mercer offered, and received support, to remain as the Panel's representative on the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels. She would provide the Panel with feedback from the meetings.
- Continuing the membership of the East Midlands Police and Crime Panels Network, the Panel would benefit from access to training.
- Training should be provided for new members of the Panel and the substitutes.
- The Panel sought to meet and receive an informal briefing from the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer, and suggested it be held on site at a central location and for time to be allowed for the Panel to ask questions on behalf of the public. Provision of headline slides, in advance, would enable the Panel to prepare questions.
- A meeting should be arranged to bring the early intervention work to a conclusion.
- Training on effective scrutiny, questioning skills and understanding information would help to support the effectiveness of the Panel as a scrutiny body

In response to points raised during discussion the Democratic Services Assistant Manager provided additional information as follows:

- New Panel members received a welcome pack in the form of an in-house Brief Guide to Police, Fire and Crime Panel and links to information on best practice and the roles of Police, Fire and Crime panels.
- It was proposed that arrangements for recruitment of independent co-opted Panel members should be considered by the last Panel meeting in 2023/24 to allow time for the process to be completed for the start of 2024/25.

During the course of discussion Councillor Mercer advised that correspondence, from the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels, would be circulated to the Panel Members regarding the consultation undertaken in 2023 regarding the Governments proposed changes to the Policing Protocol.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that the scheduled meeting date of 18 April 2024 would conflict with the pre-election period for the May 2024 election of the PFCC and would need to be rescheduled to an appropriate date.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel agreed that its work programme for 2023/24 should include the following matters:
 - A Police, Fire and Crime Plan delivery update presented to each regular meeting of the Panel
 - Police and Fire and Rescue Authority budget updates presented to each regular meeting of the Panel
 - The Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) Annual Report 2022/23 presented to the Panel meeting on 7 September 2023
 - A report from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on action plans developed to address areas for improvement in service delivery by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service as identified in the HMICFRS 2021/22 inspection
 - A report from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on the outcomes of the IPSOS Mori public consultation exercise on community safety in Northamptonshire carried out in 2022/23
 - A report from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on the new version of the Commissioner's full Estates Strategy
 - A report from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on the local impact of implementing the Serious Violence Duty under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022
 - A report from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on the local impact of delays in the Criminal Justice System
 - Briefing sessions with the Chief Constable and with the Chief Fire Officer on their organisations' operating environment, priorities and challenges
 - A workshop session on the development of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's proposed precepts for 2024/25 in January 2024
 - The final report resulting from task and finish work on early intervention commenced in 2022/23.
- b) The Panel requested that a briefing session with the Chief Constable and, particularly, the Chief Fire Officer be organised as soon as possible on the following basis:
 - the session to be held in-person for preference but with the option to attend remotely if this is necessary for some Panel members

- the session to be held at an appropriate service venue
 - some introductory information to be provided to Panel members ahead of the session
 - the session to allow sufficient time for Panel members to ask questions.
- c) The Panel agreed to continue its membership of the East Midlands Police and Crime Panels Network for 2023/24.
- d) The Panel agreed to continue its membership of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels for 2023/24.
- e) The Panel requested that representatives who attend network meetings provide feedback for circulation to all Panel members.
- f) The Panel agreed that training be organised for members on effective scrutiny by Police, Fire and Crime Panels.
- g) The Panel agreed that the Panel meeting scheduled for 18 April 2024 be moved to an earlier date to take account of the pre-election period for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election.

154. **Appointments to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel Complaints Sub Committee for 2023/24**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager outlined the statutory functions of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel Complaints Sub-Committee, and the appointment members.

The Panel considered the report and members indicated their interest in serving on the Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel agreed the appointment of the following members to serve on the Complaints Sub Committee for 2023/24:
- Councillors Maxwell and Pritchard from the Conservative councillor members of the Panel
 - Councillor Strachan from the Labour councillor members of the Panel
 - Mrs Shields and Miss Woodhouse from the independent co-opted members of the Panel.
- b) The Panel agreed that councillor members of the Panel be contacted following the current meeting in order to confirm the remaining members and substitutes of the Complaints Sub Committee for 2023/24.

155. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel held at the Great Hall, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton NN1 1DE on Thursday 27 July 2023 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Councillor David Smith (Chair)
Councillor Fiona Baker
Councillor André González De Savage
Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
Councillor Zoe McGhee [to item 157]
Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Russell Roberts
Councillor Winston Strachan
Mrs Anita Shields [to item 157]
Miss Pauline Woodhouse

Substitute Members:

Councillor Philip Irwin
Councillor Ian Jelley

Also Present:

Stephen Mold, Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Simon Tuhill, proposed candidate for appointment as interim Chief Fire Officer
Deborah Denton, Joint Head of Communications, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Helen King, Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Stuart McCartney, Governance and Accountability Manager, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
James Averill, Communications Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Councillor Adam Brown, West Northamptonshire Council
Councillor John McGhee, North Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Bob Purser, West Northamptonshire Council
Catherine Whitehead, Director Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer, West Northamptonshire Council
James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, West Northamptonshire Council
Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer, West Northamptonshire Council
Tracy Tiff, Democratic Services Deputy Manager, West Northamptonshire Council
Ed Bostock, Democratic Services Officer, West Northamptonshire Council
Craig Forysth, Deputy Head of Communications, West Northamptonshire Council
Adam Taylor, East Midlands Executive Council member, Fire Brigades Union
Chris Kemp, Northamptonshire Brigade Secretary, Fire Brigades Union

There were also 33 members of the public in attendance.

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Gill Mercer

Councillor Jon-Paul Carr

156. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Mercer and Carr with Councillors Jelley and Irwin substituting respectively.

157. Notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting

The Director Legal and Democratic advised that two requests to address the meeting had been received from members of the public. Neither had provided sufficient detail to establish the relevance of the addresses to the business of the current meeting and they would therefore be deferred to a future Panel meeting.

Mrs Shields stated that if the Panel was not able to hold to account the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for his recent decision regarding the appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer (CFO) she would not participate, and left the meeting.

Councillor McGhee stated that she also would not participate until the Panel could have an open discussion of these matters, and left the meeting.

The Director Legal and Democratic provided further advice to the Panel, making the following points:

- The Panel's business at the current meeting was to carry out the statutory function of holding a confirmation hearing for the proposed appointment of Simon Tuhill as interim CFO.
- Panel members would meet following the confirmation hearing to discuss how the Panel would carry out its scrutiny function in relation to recent events and address concerns that had been raised. It was right to deal with matters in that order.
- Members of the public who had requested to speak at the current meeting had been provided with information about the relevant rules of procedure. No clarification was received regarding the nature of their addresses, therefore the relevance of the addresses to the agenda item could not be established. The Chair had declined to accept their requests on this basis. They had been advised that there would be an opportunity to speak at a future Panel meeting if the nature of their addresses was established.

Due to a public disturbance the meeting was adjourned at 10.15.

The meeting reconvened at 10.21.

The Chair respectfully asked members of the public to allow the Panel to carry out the confirmation hearing without further interruption. If there were further disturbances he would adjourn the meeting again and ask for the public gallery to be cleared.

158. **Declarations of Interest**

In response to a Panel member's question the Chair confirmed that Panel members would hold a planning meeting following the confirmation hearing to discuss how the Panel would scrutinise recent events. If it was decided to convene a further Panel meeting this would be open to the public and the standard procedures for public participation would apply.

Councillor Gonzalez de Savage declared a general interest as an active supporter and fundraiser for Northamptonshire Search and Rescue.

159. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair announced that the meeting of the Panel was intended to carry out the statutory function of conducting a confirmation hearing for the proposed appointment of Simon Tuhill as interim CFO for Northamptonshire.

The Chair acknowledged the concerns raised over recent events and advised there would be a separate discussion to enable the Panel to decide how it wanted to address those concerns.

160. **Proposed appointment by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire of an interim Chief Fire Officer**

The Chair welcomed Simon Tuhill to the Panel meeting and to Northamptonshire. The Chair noted that he had been in London when the 7/7 bombings had occurred, although had not been affected, and he commended Mr Tuhill for his involvement in the response by the emergency services.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager introduced the report outlining the purpose and format of the confirmation hearing and invited Panel members to raise any questions on these matters. There were none.

The Chair then invited the PFCC to introduce Mr Tuhill as his proposed appointment as interim CFO. The PFCC made the following points:

- His priority as PFCC was to ensure that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue (NFRS) had the leadership and resources to continue to improve and modernise in order to support and protect communities.
- NFRS had made improvements over recent years but still needed to improve its organisational culture.
- NFRS would benefit from Mr Tuhill's vast frontline knowledge and experience.
- Investment in the fleet and recruitment of firefighters had improved service provision, and the pace of change in NFRS would continue.
- Mr Tuhill had undergone a robust recruitment process for the role of Deputy CFO. He had stood out as a candidate and his extensive experience and frontline skills would enhance the existing strategic operational management to support the delivery of the service.
- The PFCC had made a public apology for mistakes made regarding the previous appointment of an interim CFO and was prepared to answer Panel members' questions relating to the background issues involved.

- The permanent CFO position would be advertised from August 2023.
- As PFCC he had always sought to work with the Panel whilst addressing areas for improvement in order to deliver a more positive, inclusive Fire and Rescue service that valued staff and was committed to excellence.
- The Panel had an important role in relation to the proposed appointment of Mr Tuhill and he was confident the Panel would carry it out with vigour and insight.

In response to questions from the Panel relating to the proposed appointment the PFCC provided additional information as follows:

- NFRS currently only had one Assistant CFO in post. The PFCC's assessment was that Mr Tuhill was the best option to carry out the role of interim CFO. The recruitment process for Deputy CFO had recognised Mr Tuhill's capability and potential to be a future CFO.
- It was anticipated that the recruitment process for the permanent CFO post would run between August and October, with interviews in November and a Panel confirmation hearing in December.
- The Deputy CFO's duties included deputising for the CFO when required.
- Mr Tuhill had applied for the CFO role as part of the recruitment process that had resulted in the appointment of Mark Jones. Mr Jones's additional experience had made him the preferred candidate at the time. However, Mr Tuhill's potential had been apparent and it was very positive that NFRS had been able to attract him.
- The CFO role required experience in a variety of settings. Mr Tuhill had worked in both urban and rural areas as well as on major incidents.
- HMICFRS had reported on the organisational culture of Fire and Rescue services across England and Wales. NFRS was good operationally but needed to change its culture and become more inclusive. That was why the PFCC had sought a candidate who would effect change.

The Panel then asked Mr Tuhill a series of questions relating to his professional competence and personal independence.

Mr Tuhill was asked what his response was to being asked to carry out the role of CFO for a temporary period and what he would take from his previous professional experience to help him carry out the role. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- He was very honoured to be asked to lead the firefighters of NFRS. He had been a firefighter for 25 years: CFO was the highest rank that could be achieved and the appointment as interim CFO would be the highlight of his career.
- His professional ethos had always been to leave a service or team in a better place than when he started a role.
- During his career he had moved from working with individuals to now potentially running a whole service. His focus throughout was on professionalism, compassion and delivering an effective service to residents.

Mr Tuhill was asked what he saw as the main challenges facing NFRS and how he would seek to contribute to addressing these challenges effectively. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- In the short term he needed to meet with staff members to ensure they knew their interventions made a difference to the lives of the residents of Northamptonshire, in all areas of work that they carried out. This should also be

conveyed to members of the public. Recent events had created uncertainty that did not reflect the jobs that NFRS staff members carried out.

- NFRS faced various wider challenges. The Fire and Rescue Service operated in an extremely difficult financial climate, which created a challenge to provide all the services that might be offered. He would always advocate for resources where possible.
- There were issues with culture in various large organisations and the Fire and Rescue service was not an exception. The perception of prejudice and bigotry within the service could erode the public's trust. Therefore ensuring staff members' actions reflected society and demonstrated integrity was essential and was being addressed.
- The station visits he had undertaken had shown that NFRS firefighters were passionate and cared about both their communities and the service they provided. He would seek to further cultivate that ethic.

Councillor Gonzalez de Savage commented that firefighting was a vocation not just a job. He thanked firefighters who had attended the current meeting, which reflected their passion for the role. Mr Tuhill commented that his own 25 years' service had been a privilege and there was no better profession.

Mr Tuhill was asked how as CFO he would seek to ensure that NFRS continued to improve its performance and progress towards providing 'outstanding'-rated services for local residents, including responding to the needs of different areas within the county. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- It was vital for staff members to invest in the journey of improvement but they also expected investment in them from their leaders. There was a need to invest in people, provide them with the equipment and support to do their job and to build trust and confidence in his leadership. He expected to be held to account by NFRS staff members as part of this.
- The measure of improvement was ultimately via HMICFRS ratings. NFRS had made good progress in improving its effectiveness and efficiency. Frontline and operational delivery was superb, and it was recognised that the service needed to continue to innovate and improve.
- As the leader of NFRS he would set the tone for cultural change and ensure accountability for unacceptable behaviour.

Mr Tuhill was asked what he saw as the key factors in enabling NFRS to operate as effectively as possible in a demanding financial environment and how he would seek to address these factors. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- NFRS had been on a journey over the last five years. It had been at a low base when governance responsibility had transferred from Northamptonshire County Council. However, it was now seeing the benefit of subsequent investment. He would continue to seek further funding, accepting of the current challenging financial environment.
- At the same time NFRS needed to be innovative and identify opportunities to improve efficiency and to maximise resources.

Mr Tuhill was asked what approach he would take as CFO to NFRS's involvement in partnership working, both with other emergency services and in broader areas of

activity, to support the delivery of national and local priorities. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- Working in partnership was key. He had seen evidence of a close working relationship with Northamptonshire Police, with a joint command unit and a fully integrated team of fire officers and police officers. He sought to identify further areas of collaboration to deliver better public safety.
- Fire and Rescue services could add value across public safety throughout the community. One example of this from his service in Hertfordshire was the contribution that the Fire and Rescue service had made to the response to COVID-19, which included working with the local authority, health organisations and the armed forces to set up a mass vaccination centre.
- The Fire and Rescue service had worked with adults and children's services to add value and help to make a difference to vulnerable people. He was keen to continue this approach in Northamptonshire. Schemes such as Fire and Rescue cadets were beneficial both to young people and to the service.

The Chair noted that Fire and Rescue services were often in a position to enter situations that other partner organisations could not.

Mr Tuhill was asked to give an example of when he had led a major service transformation project, what challenges he had faced in doing so and how he had ensured that the project was delivered successfully. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- NFRS had commissioned an emergency cover review and he had experience of producing a similar piece of work in Hertfordshire. It was essential that an emergency cover review looked at the three key areas of response, prevention and protection and the interrelationship between them.
- The Hertfordshire review had looked, in detail, at how services were provided and whether resources were suitable and sufficient. As a result of this data-led exercise, new appliances were introduced in the county that included some different types of vehicle tailored to the specific requirements of the areas they were serving. He had acted as the senior sponsor of all the projects involved.

Mr Tuhill was asked how he would seek to work with the PFCC to reflect that the PFCC and the CFO had distinct responsibilities but must also work well as a team in the interests of Northamptonshire. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- The relationship between the CFO and the PFCC was clearly important. It should be based on open discussion. The PFCC set strategy and the CFO was responsible for operational delivery. He would expect to be held to account robustly for this.
- He may not always agree with the PFCC but they should be able to disagree agreeably. He would provide professional advice to the PFCC. If there was a disagreement it should be addressed through open and constructive discussion with a view to agreeing a way forward.

Mr Tuhill was asked how he would take into account the differences between urban and rural communities in delivering services. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- Hertfordshire had a similar mix of urban and rural areas to Northamptonshire with a similar number of full-time and on call stations. The emergency cover review had considered risks in the county and the capacity to respond: if it was accepted

that it was not always possible for an appliance to reach some rural areas within the standard response time what options were available to mitigate this situation.

- Data should be used to identify higher risk areas and to focus prevention activity in rural communities to mitigate risk there.

Mr Tuhill was asked how as CFO he would work to support cultural transformation in NFRS that enabled it to develop into a fully inclusive workplace that was representative of the communities that it served. Mr Tuhill was also asked whether he would visit and meet local councillors who might not otherwise be able to engage with the CFO. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- He would provide clear visible leadership. It was important that staff members had trust and confidence in him as the interim CFO and in his substantive role of Deputy CFO. Meeting staff members and giving a clear picture of what they could expect of him was important.
- Setting a standard would enable staff members to hold him to account and vice versa. All fire officers, regardless of rank, were held to account to the same National Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue.
- There were some related structural issues that needed to be addressed. Some older buildings may not support inclusion and diversity, for example, if they did not provide changing facilities for female staff members. Resources to address this needed to be identified.
- Policies and procedures should be reviewed where necessary to ensure they were inclusive to support people from diverse and under-represented groups.
- As CFO he would meet with local councillors. He hoped that there were already strong relationships between locally based NFRS officers and the community but he was happy to reinforce this by engaging as CFO.
- The CFO should be held to account by Northamptonshire residents in the most practical way.

Panel members commented that the Northamptonshire Association of Local Councils (NALC) could provide a practical way for the CFO to engage with local community representatives. Mr Tuhill responded that he would be happy to meet with NALC. NFRS would engage with all areas. It was on an improvement journey that should involve challenge but that should ultimately be led by evidence and data to produce a sound basis for future service plans.

Mr Tuhill was asked how as CFO he would seek to work with staff representative organisations to build and maintain constructive working relationships whilst also reflecting the need to deliver an appropriate level of service to the community. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- The current meeting provided a further demonstration that NFRS staff members were passionate and cared about their service.
- He would work as closely as possible with the representative bodies to build relationships, to develop a mutual understanding of respective positions and to maintain a continual and open dialogue.
- There would not always be agreement on decisions. Changes would be made based on data and evidence and as CFO he would seek early engagement with staff groups to explain the reasons for change and to enable them at least to be understood.

- Relationships between Fire and Rescue senior managers and representative groups had improved over recent years as had been evident during negotiations for a pay increment for firefighters. His challenge was to build further on this whilst recognising that the CFO may need to take unpopular decisions.

Mr Tuhill was asked what key principles he would seek to apply as the operational leader of NFRS in order to inspire confidence and respect in his leadership amongst staff members. Mr Tuhill responded that staff members' safety was paramount. As CFO he aimed to provide staff members with the right equipment, training and facilities with the expectation in return that they would be receptive and committed. He wanted staff members to recognise how seriously he took this issue.

Mr Tuhill was asked what relationship he thought that CFO should have with the Panel, given the respective roles of the Panel and PFCC. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- He had had a good relationship with similar panels in the past and wanted this to continue. He anticipated open dialogue with the Panel and with councillors in the county.
- The Panel could formally request that he attend a meeting but he would also propose to offer informal briefings and similar sessions on emerging national issues and how they affected Northamptonshire that could assist the Panel.
- The CFO had a role in assisting the Panel to understand the duties of the Fire and Rescue service.
- The public perception of a firefighter's role needed to be addressed to recognise the breadth of tasks actually involved in the prevention and protection elements.

Mr Tuhill was asked what he would most like to achieve during his time as CFO if he was appointed. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- The short term aim was to deal with some of the recent turbulence and move the focus back onto service delivery and prevention and protection work, reinforcing the sense that NFRS was one organisation working together to deliver services to Northamptonshire. NFRS senior managers would be carrying out visits to stations to listen to staff members and explain priorities. Building trust and confidence amongst staff members was an immediate priority.
- In the longer term he would seek to help to address other issues concerning organisational culture, service delivery, provision of facilities and the emergency cover review.

Mr Tuhill was asked what issues had been raised with him by staff members during visits to fire stations in the context of the recent situation. Mr Tuhill made the following points:

- His experience of recent visits had been so positive that it further reinforced his pride at being asked to carry out the role of interim CFO.
- Visits to stations that were the base for functions such as large animal rescue and swift water rescue had shown staff members' pride in specialist capabilities.
- Issues raised by staff members during some visits were operational, relating to additional equipment or better uniforms. These would be collated to enable possible action to be considered.
- Staff members were generally proud to be working for NFRS.

Miss Woodhouse welcomed the focus on nurturing staff members and on them being able to question the CFO that Mr Tuhill had shown in his answers to the Panel's questions. Mr Tuhill commented further that staff development and enabling staff members to be invested in NFRS was important. As CFO he aimed to take a 'you said; we did' approach and to enable staff members to understand decisions and actions taken.

The Chair thanked Mr Tuhill for his responses to the Panel's questions and asked if he wished to make any further comments or ask any questions to the Panel. Mr Tuhill had no questions for the Panel but reiterated that he was deeply honoured to be given the opportunity to lead NFRS. He would carry out the role to the best of his ability for as long as he could.

Councillor Gonzalez de Savage noted that if appointed Mr Tuhill would become interim CFO at a challenging time and would have five months to make an impact. He encouraged Mr Tuhill to be proactive about engaging with partners if he saw the need to raise issues. Mr Tuhill responded that he needed to learn about Northamptonshire but was looking forward to doing so. As well meeting staff members he needed to understand NFRS's governance processes. Ensuring that the organisation ran as effectively as possible also contributed to delivering the best outcomes.

161. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

162. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

The Chair requested the Panel to agree that the remainder of the meeting be held in private session.

RESOLVED that: under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that if the public and press were present it would be likely that exempt information under Part 1 Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the act of the descriptions would be disclosed to them.

The remainder of the meeting took place in private session.

163. **Report and recommendation to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire on the proposed appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer**

The Panel considered its report and recommendation on the proposed appointment.

At the conclusion of discussion the Chair invited the Panel to reach a resolution on the proposed appointment and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that: the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel recommends that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner appoints Mr Simon Tuhill as the interim Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire.

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel held at the Jeffrey Room, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton NN1 1DE on Monday 14 August 2023 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Councillor Gill Mercer (Deputy Chair) (in the Chair)
 Councillor Fiona Baker
 Councillor Zoe McGhee
 Councillor Ken Pritchard
 Councillor Winston Strachan
 Mrs Anita Shields
 Miss Pauline Woodhouse

Substitute Members:

Councillor Greg Lunn

Also in Attendance:

Stephen Mold, Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
 David Peet, proposed candidate for appointment as the interim Chief Executive, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
 Helen King, Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
 Stuart McCartney, Governance and Accountability Manager, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
 Catherine Whitehead, Director Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer, West Northamptonshire Council
 James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, West Northamptonshire Council
 Richard Woods, Democratic Services Officer, West Northamptonshire Council
 Adam Taylor, East Midlands Executive Council Member, Fire Brigades Union

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor David Smith
 Councillor Jon-Paul Carr
 Councillor André González De Savage
 Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
 Councillor Russell Roberts

There were also four members of the public in attendance.

164. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Smith, Carr, González De Savage, Maxwell and Roberts and from substitute members Councillors Irwin and Jelley. Councillor Lunn substituted for Councillor Smith.

165. **Notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting**

None received.

166. **Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

167. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting and thanked Panel members for their commitment in attending recent additional meetings that the Panel had needed to hold.

168. **Proposed appointment by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire of an interim Chief Executive**

The Chair welcomed Mr David Peet to the meeting and Panel members present introduced themselves.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager summarised the statutory requirements relating to confirmation hearings and the process to be followed by the Panel, highlighting the following points.

- The Panel's questions to the candidate at the confirmation hearing should focus on their professional competence and personal independence.
- The confirmation hearing was intended to be a final check and not to repeat or duplicate the process that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) had used to identify the candidate.
- The Panel did not have the power to veto the proposed appointment of a chief executive of the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC). It could decide to recommend that an appointment not be made. However, this should be a rare scenario as it would effectively mean that the Panel considered that the candidate did not meet the minimum standards for the role.

The Chair then invited the PFCC to introduce Mr David Peet as his proposed appointment as interim Chief Executive of the OPFCC. The PFCC made the following points:

- Mr Peet had 14 years' senior experience in policing governance, including with Northamptonshire Police, which meant that this was not the first confirmation hearing he had attended.
- Panel members were aware of the background to the current appointment. The PFCC needed to appoint an interim Chief Executive and needed a candidate with sufficient seniority and experience for the role.
- Mr Peet's previous experience and local knowledge would enable him to make a fast start, with the support of colleagues in the OPFCC.
- The appointment of an interim Chief Executive would provide continuity whilst the permanent role was advertised.

- The Panel had an important part to play in the overall appointment process and he was sure that it would carry out this role with appropriate vigour and insight.

In response to a question from the Panel the PFCC confirmed that Mr Peet would be employed on a contract as a consultant, as the PFCC had received HR advice that this represented the most straightforward approach to take. However, Mr Peet would have the full powers of the Chief Executive.

The Panel then asked Mr Peet a series of questions relating to his professional competence and personal independence.

Mr Peet was asked what particularly attracted him to this opportunity to carry out the role of Chief Executive on an interim basis. Mr Peet responded that when he had been contacted by the PFCC he had thought that the role offered a great opportunity to use his previous experience. Northamptonshire always had a place in his heart. He also liked a challenge.

Mr Peet was asked what he saw as the priorities for the OPFCC in the immediate future and what he would take from his previous professional experience to enable him to contribute to delivering these effectively. Mr Peet made the following points:

- One of the key priorities for the OPFCC was dealing with the recent period of instability. He would aim to address this and to provide strong advice to the PFCC to assist him in carrying out his role.
- The next PFCC election would take place in under a year. Part of the role of the PFCC's Monitoring Officer was to ensure that the OPFCC would continue to carry out its functions effectively in this context. He had significant experience of this as he had overseen several elections from the perspective of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)'s office.

Mr Peet was asked how he would ensure that he was fully informed about the elements of the role relating to the Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority. Mr Peet made the following points:

- He had significant previous experience of working with Fire and Rescue colleagues: for example, in Derbyshire he had been part of the senior team leading the development of a joint headquarters and training facility.
- He had previously chaired the Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives, which also gave experience of both elements of the PFCC's remit.

Mr Peet was asked to give an example of when he had moved into a new role or organisation at a strategic level and quickly needed to understand it so as to inform him in carrying out his role, the approach he had taken and how effective this had been. Mr Peet made the following points:

- He had taken up the role of Chief Executive of the Derbyshire OPCC in April 2013, soon after the PCC model of governance had been implemented. He had inherited an officer team from the former police authority and new ways of working were still being understood. In this situation he needed to instil confidence amongst staff members in his understanding of the new governance model and that he would listen and respond to their concerns.

- Whilst he had been the Chief Executive of the Derbyshire OPCC there had been a very low level of staff turnover, consistently high staff satisfaction ratings and good feedback on his management. The Derbyshire OPCC had also repeatedly been recognised for its performance on transparency.

Mr Peet was asked what experience he would bring to supporting the delivery of the strategic priorities in the PFCC's Police, Fire and Crime Plan relating to prevention and early intervention and to protecting and supporting those who are vulnerable. Mr Peet made the following points:

- He had significant previous experience of developing and delivering Police and Crime plans. As Chief Executive of the Derbyshire OPCC he had also worked on various early intervention and prevention initiatives.
- As a senior leader at the Big Issue Foundation earlier in his career he had done considerable work on the prevention of homelessness, which gave him practical experience of frontline service delivery.

Mr Peet was asked what his approach was to building and maintaining productive relationships with partner organisations, particularly when dealing with challenging matters, in order to achieve good outcomes. Mr Peet made the following points:

- Partnership working had been a golden thread throughout his career. His approach was based on honesty, making time for partners, looking at what they were trying to achieve and identifying synergies.
- One of his proudest achievements as Chief Executive of the Derbyshire OPCC was bringing together partners on the provision of housing for high-risk offenders. This had taken a lot of effort to achieve and it was important to commit sufficient time to partnership working.

Mr Peet was asked to comment on his experience of the youth offending field, given that the OPFCC played a leading role in the Youth Offending Board. Mr Peet advised that he had gained significant experience in this field from an OPCC perspective in Derbyshire and Leicestershire. The Leicestershire PCC had chaired the Local Criminal Justice Board and, as Chief Executive, he had needed to ensure that the PCC was briefed on all relevant subjects including youth offending.

Mr Peet was asked how he would seek to encourage the maintenance of high standards in the way that the PFCC and the OPFCC operated. Mr Peet made the following points:

- One of the Chief Executive's key roles was to support the PFCC to operate in a way that maintained public trust in the role. He had worked towards this aim through many years in his professional career.
- He was prepared to speak truth to power. The Chief Executive was a trusted advisor to the PFCC but should also be able to challenge the PFCC where necessary in the interests of the public good. He had practical experience of doing this in previous roles. He believed that the Chief Executive should give the PFCC options to consider rather than just a negative response.

Mr Peet was asked to give an example of when he had been required to challenge someone at a senior level about a course of action that they were proposing and how he went about doing this effectively. Mr Peet made the following points:

- During the COVID-19 pandemic the Derbyshire PCC had provided support for projects intended to protect vulnerable older people from rogue traders. As part of this the PCC had wanted to give funding to a local foodbank for a shopping service.
- As Chief Executive he had thought what the PCC proposed to do was outside the PCC's powers. He had therefore given the PCC alternative options for achieving the outcomes sought. This had resulted in a scheme to provide pre-loaded store credit cards to older people, which they could ask others to use without risking that their bank account would be cleared.

Mr Peet was asked what relationship he would seek to have with the Panel if he was appointed and how the Panel could contribute to supporting his role. Mr Peet made the following points:

- He had extensive experience of working with panels, particularly in Derbyshire. As Chief Executive he had maintained a good relationship with the Monitoring Officer for the panel and had communicated regularly with the Monitoring Officer about the panel's work programme.
- The Panel was ultimately seeking the same outcomes as the PFCC and his staff, which was to enable local residents to receive the best quality services. As Chief Executive he would seek to work collaboratively with the Panel. Its role was to scrutinise and support the PFCC and he would assist the PFCC to provide information requested by the Panel.

A Panel member questioned that Mr Peet had been endorsed on LinkedIn by the PFCC but not by the Derbyshire or Leicestershire PCCs. Mr Peet was asked to comment on the reasons for this and on his personal independence if appointed as interim Chief Executive, particularly given the context for the proposed appointment. Mr Peet made the following points:

- He could only speculate why the other PCCs had not endorsed him on LinkedIn. He did not know how much the individuals concerned used the platform.
- His ability to maintain personal independence was demonstrated by his track record as an OPCC chief executive across many years. This had included work at national level on police complaints reform and with the Home Office on two spending reviews.
- He understood why the question had been asked in the current context. He had worked as a colleague with the PFCC on regional collaboration in the East Midlands, including carrying out a significant piece of work on assurance and oversight of collaborations. This could explain the endorsement of him from the PFCC. However, he was not a personal friend of the PFCC.
- His aim if appointed as the interim Chief Executive was to provide a good quality service to the PFCC and to Northamptonshire residents. He hoped to have the opportunity to demonstrate this in practice.

The Chair reminded the Panel of the purpose of the confirmation hearing and that it was not intended to be a selection process.

The Chair invited Mr Peet to raise any questions that he wished to ask the Panel or further comments that he wished to make. Mr Peet advised that he had no questions or additional comments.

169. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

170. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

The Chair requested the Panel to agree that the remainder of the meeting be held in private session.

RESOLVED that: under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that if the public and press were present it would be likely that exempt information under Part 1 Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the act of the descriptions would be disclosed to them.

The remainder of the meeting took place in private session.

171. **Report and recommendation to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire on the proposed appointment of an interim Chief Executive**

The Panel considered its report and recommendation on the proposed appointment.

At the conclusion of discussion the Chair invited the Panel to reach a resolution on the proposed appointment. On a vote of 7 members in favour and one against it was:

RESOLVED that: the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel recommends that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire appoints Mr David Peet as interim Chief Executive.

The meeting closed at 11.15 am

Chair: _____

Date: _____

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel held at the Great Hall, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton NN1 1DE on Thursday 7 September 2023 at 12.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor David Smith (Chair)
Councillor Gill Mercer (Deputy Chair)
Councillor André González De Savage
Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
Councillor Zoe McGhee
Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Russell Roberts
Councillor Winston Strachan
Mrs Anita Shields

Substitute Members:

Councillor Greg Lunn
Councillor Philip Irwin

Also in Attendance:

Stephen Mold, Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
David Peet, interim Chief Executive, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Helen King, Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Deborah Denton, Head of Communications, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Stuart McCartney, Governance and Accountability Manager, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Councillor Sally Beardsworth, West Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Phil Bignell, West Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Paul Clark, West Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Bob Purser, West Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Wendy Randall, West Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Danielle Stone, West Northamptonshire Council
Catherine Whitehead, Director Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer, West Northamptonshire Council
James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, West Northamptonshire Council
Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer, West Northamptonshire
Paul Hanson, Head of Democratic and Elections, West Northamptonshire Council
Tracy Tiff, Democratic Services Deputy Manager, West Northamptonshire Council
Craig Forsyth, Deputy Head of Communications, West Northamptonshire Council
Gillian Baldock, Conservative Group Political Assistant, West Northamptonshire Council
Josh West, Labour Group Political Assistant, West Northamptonshire Council
Adam Taylor, East Midlands Executive Council member, Fire Brigades Union
Chris Kemp, Northamptonshire Brigade Secretary, Fire Brigades Union

There were also 56 members of the public in attendance.

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Fiona Baker
Councillor Jon-Paul Carr
Miss Pauline Woodhouse

172. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baker and Carr, who were substituted by Councillors Lunn and Irwin, and from Miss Woodhouse.

The Chair advised that he intended to vary the order of the agenda to bring forward Chair's Announcements.

173. Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed all those present and made the following points:

- The purpose of the meeting was to enable the Panel to scrutinise decisions taken by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) connected with the appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer in July 2023.
- The Panel was appointed to carry out specific tasks such as scrutinising the PFCC's Police, Fire and Crime Plan. The Panel also had the more general responsibility to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the PFCC in connection with the discharge of the PFCC's functions.
- The Panel was required to carry out all of its functions with a view to supporting the effective exercise of the functions of the PFCC.
- The Panel had the power to require information from the PFCC and to make reports or recommendations to the PFCC. The PFCC must respond to a report or recommendation, although the PFCC was not required to agree with it. The Panel had no power to sanction the PFCC. The PFCC was ultimately answerable to the electorate not to the Panel.
- It was recognised that the situation that had led to the current meeting had attracted considerable attention. It was right that the Panel scrutinised this situation. However, the way that the Panel did this had to reflect the requirements and parameters that the Chair had mentioned.
- At the start of the meeting the Panel would hear addresses or questions from members of the public who had been registered to speak. The Chair had not agreed some requests to speak that had been received ahead of the meeting. However, after further consideration, if any of those members of the public were present they would be given the opportunity to speak. Councillors wishing to raise points could do so through colleagues on the Panel.
- The Panel would then ask a series of questions to the PFCC intended to produce information about the matter under scrutiny in addition to that included with the report on the agenda. The PFCC had been given advance notice of these questions. There would be the opportunity for follow-up questions and for the Panel to pursue lines of enquiry that may emerge. The extensive list of questions might limit the number of supplementary questions needed.
- The Panel would then discuss and agree any resolutions or recommendations that it wished to make based on the information it had gained. As was normal practice, the Panel would aim to reach a consensus but conclusions could be decided by a vote if necessary.

- All those present were thanked for taking the time to attend and the Chair looked forward to their contributions.

174. **Notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting**

The Chair advised that eight members of the public had been registered to speak but others who had requested to speak ahead of the meeting would also be accommodated if they were present. Speakers would be heard together and the PFCC would then respond to their points.

Mr Adam Taylor addressed the meeting and made the following points:

- He wished to present the concerns and anger raised by Northamptonshire Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members arising from the appointment by the PFCC of an uncredible Chief Fire Officer (CFO). The FBU considered that this decision had made the PFCC's position immediately untenable.
- The reasons given by the PFCC for the appointment of Nicci Marzec as interim CFO were not credible. The PFCC had argued that the appointment needed to be made urgently in time for the British Grand Prix on 7 July 2023, but Ms Marzec had not been available for the event and had had no operational authority to act.
- The PFCC had stated to the FBU on 10 July 2023 that neither the incoming Deputy CFO nor the Assistant CFO of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) could carry out the role of interim CFO. The FBU disputed this view.
- The PFCC had been wrong to proceed with the appointment without a confirmation hearing, which was backed up the legal advice obtained by West Northamptonshire Council's Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Panel.
- The FBU believed that the intention to appoint Ms Marzec was premeditated. He suggested that Mr Jones had indicated at a meeting with the FBU in June 2023 that he would be forced out of the role of CFO due to differences with the PFCC.
- The creation of a Deputy CFO role at NFRS was intended to support the PFCC's agenda at a time when there were no resources for firefighters' pay.
- The Northamptonshire FBU had unanimously passed a vote of no confidence in the PFCC on 4 September 2023. They felt that the PFCC had turned his back on firefighters during the past two months.
- He demanded that the Panel held the PFCC to the highest account and pass a vote of no confidence in the PFCC.

Mr Chris Kemp addressed the meeting and made the following points:

- The Northamptonshire FBU had passed a vote of no confidence in the PFCC, which was a stark and unprecedented step. He believed that the PFCC could not justify actions he had taken during the past two months.
- The Panel should hold the PFCC to the highest account and vote that it had no confidence in him.

Mr Gary Lovell addressed the meeting and made the following points:

- He was speaking as an ordinary citizen who was disgusted by the appointment made by the PFCC.

- The Mail on Sunday on 23 July 2023 had published an article claiming that the PFCC was in an intimate relationship with Ms Marzec. The PFCC had denied this and had been quoted as saying that had he been aware of related rumours he would have ensured the appointment was subject to a confirmation hearing.
- The Nolan Principles included honesty. If the PFCC's denial was found not to be truthful then it made his position untenable. The PFCC was therefore questioned about whether he intended to resign.

Mr Steven Holmes addressed the meeting and made the following points:

- The PFCC was the co-owner of a company called Uber Shop Ltd. The NN Journal website had reported that Ms Marzec had frequently worked from the company's offices in Brackmills. This could lead to the assumption that Ms Marzec was not working on OPFCC business.
- The PFCC was questioned whether he accepted that it would be a misuse of public money and a breach of the Nolan Principles to allow a friend employed by the OPFCC to work on his private business.

Ms Athynea Burchall addressed the meeting and made the following points:

- She was speaking as a member of the public.
- The CFO role was a crucial one for public safety in Northamptonshire.
- The PFCC had not brought the proposed appointment of Ms Marzec as interim CFO to the Panel even though he had an acknowledged friendship with her. This did not reflect the Nolan Principle relating to objectivity in decision-making.
- The PFCC was questioned whether there were no other NFRS officers who could have been appointed as interim CFO.
- The PFCC was questioned whether he had met the standards of objectivity set out in the Nolan Principles and, if not, whether he would resign.

Mr Andy Cassidy addressed the meeting and made the following points:

- He was speaking as a member of the public.
- The email from the OPFCC to the East Midlands Police Legal Services (EMPLS) on 27 June 2023 seeking legal advice about the appointment of Ms Marzec as interim CFO referred to holding a retrospective confirmation hearing if necessary. It was arrogant to assume that the Panel would confirm the appointment given Ms Marzec's lack of operational experience.
- The appointment of Ms Marzec as interim CFO was a conflict of interest. The OPFCC Code of Conduct paragraph 6.1 stated that individuals should not be involved in the selection process for an appointment if they had a close personal relationship with the applicant.
- The PFCC was questioned whether he had seen and approved the email to EMPLS on 27 June 2023 before it was sent and how he justified breaking his own Code of Conduct.

Ms Libby Lawes addressed the meeting and made the following points:

- She was speaking as a member of the public who was fed up with what she saw as examples of corruption from those in positions of authority.
- The PFCC had failed to abide by the Nolan Principles, which brought the authority into disrepute and damaged the reputation of Northamptonshire. This was more important than party political interest.

- There should be consequences for failing to abide by the Nolan Principles. The Panel should remove the PFCC not just ask him to resign.

Councillor Wendy Randall addressed the meeting and made the following points:

- The OPFCC had sought legal advice from EMPLS about the appointment of an interim CFO on 27 June 2023, which was the week before Mr Jones's resignation.
- The legal advice obtained by West Northamptonshire Council's Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Panel gave a different view to the advice from EMPLS.
- The PFCC had not followed proper process. He had given the impression of being above the law and this did not serve the residents of Northamptonshire.
- The vote of no confidence by the Northamptonshire FBU was illustrative.
- The PFCC could not remain in his position without public faith in him. The Panel was therefore urged to vote that it also had no confidence in the PFCC.

Ms Maria Addison addressed the meeting and questioned whether the Nolan Principles applied in Northamptonshire. She suggested that people appeared to be covering for the PFCC and this had gone on too long.

Mr Richard Berkshire addressed the meeting and expressed support for points made by previous speakers. Many of those present thought the PFCC should resign. More people would have been present if the meeting had not been held in the middle of the day.

175. **Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

176. **Scrutiny of decisions by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner connected with the appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer for Northamptonshire**

The Chair introduced the report and invited Panel members to raise any questions about the background information included in the report or the process that the Panel would follow at the meeting.

The Director Legal and Democratic responded to points of clarification raised by Panel member as follows:

- The redactions in the two sets of legal advice appended to the report related to the names and personal information of individuals. A particular redaction at the start of the email from the OPFCC to EMPLS on 27 June 2023 concerned information about a third party that was not relevant to the Panel's purpose and it was not appropriate to publish it. None of the redactions should prevent the Panel from understanding the facts of the matters that it was scrutinising.
- The PFCC would need to advise whether he had sought any legal advice directly. However, it was normal practice for an elected representative such as the PFCC or a councillor to seek such advice through a support officer.

The Chair invited the PFCC to respond to points raised by the public speakers. The PFCC advised that this would be covered in his responses to the Panel's questions.

The Panel then asked the PFCC a series of questions on different aspects of his decisions connected with the appointment of an interim CFO in July 2023.

Decisions relating to the departure of Mr Jones

The PFCC was asked when he had been informed by Mr Jones that he was considering retiring as CFO and what steps the PFCC had taken regarding that information. The PFCC made the following points:

- He thanked the Panel for the chance to explain the rationale for his decisions regarding the appointment of an interim CFO. He regretted that he had not had the chance to do so before now.
- He hoped that information provided at the current meeting would also inform the Complaints Sub Committee meeting on the following day.
- As PFCC he had regular one-to-one meetings with Mr Jones to hold him to account as CFO and to discuss any personal matters. It was vital that these meetings remained confidential. Mr Jones had left NFRS on 7 July 2023 by mutual agreement.
- The confidentiality of discussion between the PFCC and Mr Jones was also subject to a legal agreement.

The PFCC was asked what his understanding was of the reason for Mr Jones's resignation. The PFCC responded that the statements issued to the public and staff members on 7 July 2023 had stated that Mr Jones had been affected by injuries.

The PFCC was asked if he had considered whether any health issues that led to Mr Jones's resignation were associated with his employment with NFRS. The PFCC responded that Mr Jones had never raised any issues relating to NFRS at his regular meetings with the PFCC. The PFCC did not believe that the working environment at NFRS was a factor in Mr Jones's decision.

The PFCC was asked whether Mr Jones's notice period had been waived or whether any other financial settlement had been made. The PFCC responded that he was bound by a confidentiality agreement and could not discuss the specifics of the mutual agreement for Mr Jones's departure. Information would be published in the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts as required.

The PFCC was asked what progress had been made by Mr Jones or NFRS generally to address the outcome of the HMICFRS 2021/22 inspection and the significant concern represented by the 'requires improvement' finding in the People category, particularly with reference to ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. The PFCC was also asked how many female and BME firefighters were employed by NFRS. The PFCC made the following points:

- The 'requires improvement' rating was clearly a concern and addressing it was a key priority for the PFCC and NFRS. NFRS was pushing ahead with cultural change thanks to the hard work of all staff members. It had implemented the Serving with Pride programme and all staff members had participated in surveys and workshops to understand issues and inform improvements.
- There was a clear view of what needed to be done, a committed approach and real progress was now being made. However, at the time of Mr Jones's departure there remained various unresolved matters, including relationship issues

between NFRS and other professionals. As the Monitoring Officer for NFRS Ms Marzec was heavily involved in trying to address these issues.

- NFRS employed nearly 500 firefighters. Female and BME firefighters made up a relatively small proportion of the total. He would need to confirm the exact numbers to the Panel.

The PFCC was asked whether Mr Jones or he had encountered resistance to attempts to address the concerns raised by HMICFRS, either by utilising direct recruitment or otherwise, to improve diversity in the workforce. The PFCC made the following points:

- His priority was delivering an efficient and effective NFRS. Attracting good people was vital to achieving this priority and he made no apology for trying to do this.
- NFRS staff members had overwhelmingly embraced the Serving with Pride programme.
- The FBU nationally were opposed to direct entry to senior positions in Fire and Rescue services. He believed that this was part of the opposition to the appointment of Ms Marzec as interim CFO. He did not agree with the FBU's view.
- When Mr Jones was recruited as CFO two of the four shortlisted candidates had not been firefighters and staff members had not raised concerns about this. Several other Fire and Rescue services already had CFOs who were not firefighters.
- The HMICFRS spotlight report on values and culture in Fire and Rescue services also encouraged that adverts for senior leadership roles should only require operational incident command experience if absolutely necessary for the role.

Decisions relating to the appointment of Ms Marzec

The PFCC was asked what advice he had obtained from Human Resources at NFRS about the selection process for an interim CFO. The PFCC made the following points:

- HR was a shared service. He had involved the Head of HR in discussions about interim arrangements.
- He had sought legal advice from EMPLS on interim arrangements as had been done for the appointment of an interim Chief Constable at the start of 2023. This had resulted in advice that an individual already employed in the organisation could be appointed to act up without a confirmation hearing.
- It was correct that EMPLS had been contacted for legal advice on 27 June 2023 and Mr Jones had resigned on 7 July 2023. It was reasonable to infer from these dates that the PFCC had been aware of Mr Jones's departure before the day it was announced, although discussions between them had to remain confidential.

Panel members asked the PFCC related supplementary questions. The PFCC made the following additional points:

- The reference in the email to EMPLS of 27 June 2023 to not proceeding with recruitment of a new CFO reflected that the recruitment consultant needed to support recruitment was not in place at that point. Simon Tuhill had also not started as Deputy CFO. That was why an interim arrangement was necessary.
- The recruitment of Mr Tuhill as Deputy CFO had been conducted in an open and appropriate way. Mr Tuhill had been appointed on a three-year contract with a view to him developing towards the CFO role with the support of Mr Jones.

- There was no long-term plan to appoint Ms Marzec. It reflected the need for an interim appointment, the need to address the outcomes of the HMICFRS inspection and the expectation of a further inspection. The intention was that Ms Marzec would focus on corporate elements of the CFO's role whilst Mr Tuhill covered the operational elements.
- There were clear processes relating to the dismissal of a CFO including consulting with HMICFRS. They were not relevant in this case as Mr Jones had resigned.
- HMICFRS had published a national report on values and culture across all Fire and Rescue services. This included an example of poor culture from NFRS. The appointments of Mr Jones and then Ms Marzec were intended to help to address this situation. The PFCC had also been informed by a public survey of attitudes to community safety in Northamptonshire.

The PFCC was asked how he ensured compliance with NFRS Recruitment Procedures when he carried out the selection of Ms Marzec. The PFCC responded that there had not been a recruitment process as he was not recruiting a CFO in this case but making an interim appointment. Ms Marzec had had no interest in the permanent role. There were many precedents for interim appointments from within an organisation being made without a recruitment process.

Panel members asked the PFCC related supplementary questions. The PFCC made the following additional points:

- Part of the reason for appointing an interim CFO to carry out the role for up to 12 months was that he anticipated being criticised if he had sought to appoint a permanent CFO less than a year before the next PFCC election.
- It took at least three months to recruit a permanent CFO.
- Mr Tuhill had not commenced employment as Deputy CFO at the point Mr Jones left. The appointment of an interim CFO was intended to help to manage this transition and to support Mr Tuhill.
- The PFCC had not been involved in the selection of Mr Tuhill as Deputy CFO. The PFCC had met Mr Tuhill when he had applied for the CFO position through the recruitment process that had resulted in the appointment of Mr Jones.

The PFCC was asked whether he had invited expressions of interest from the NFRS senior management team in the role of interim CFO. The PFCC made the following points:

- There was only one other permanent member of the NFRS senior management team in post at the time when Mr Jones left.
- It would not have been appropriate to make acting up arrangements that resulted in Mr Tuhill as Deputy CFO reporting to an interim CFO who held a less senior substantive position in NFRS.
- Ms Marzec was an experienced senior leader and was already the Monitoring Officer for NFRS. The PFCC believed that she could make a positive impact in a limited time.

The PFCC was asked whether he had advertised the interim CFO role externally and, if not, how the decision was made to appoint an external candidate under the NFRS recruitment policy. The PFCC responded that the role had not been advertised externally as it was a temporary acting up appointment not a permanent one.

The appointment had been made on the basis that he believed Ms Marzec could make a positive contribution in the time that she held the role.

The PFCC was asked what selection criteria were applied to assess the suitability of the candidate for the role. The PFCC made the following points:

- The process followed reflected that this was a temporary arrangement and not a formal selection for a permanent appointment. Ms Marzec's suitability had been assessed against the CFO job description and current priorities.
- Ms Marzec was a proven senior leader with experience of delivering organisational change in challenging environments. She had an understanding of NFRS, had worked on relevant strategic projects and could help to maintain the momentum of change. The PFCC believed that Ms Marzec was more than qualified to be appointed as interim CFO.
- The PFCC had not interviewed Ms Marzec but had met with her to outline his expectations and priorities.

The PFCC was asked about the exact nature of the role that had been offered to Ms Marzec; whether it was the entire CFO role or part of it and the period of the interim appointment. The PFCC made the following points:

- Ms Marzec had been appointed to act up as CFO on a temporary basis to advance the strategic and corporate business of NFRS. At that point NFRS had two Assistant CFOs with significant operational experience, who were joined by a third when Mr Tuhill started as Deputy CFO on 18 July 2023.
- Ms Marzec did not need to have operational experience to carry out the role of interim CFO, as was demonstrated by examples of other Fire and Rescue services led by CFOs who had not been firefighters.
- The interim appointment was intended to run for the short term whilst a permanent CFO was recruited and would have been kept under review.

The PFCC was asked what offer of employment had been made to Ms Marzec in relation to remuneration and other terms and conditions and who had decided these matters. The PFCC made the following points:

- Ms Marzec had been asked to take on the role of interim CFO whilst retaining some existing OPFCC responsibilities. She would have been remunerated with an honorarium representing a full year increase of £35K on her substantive salary. This remuneration had been discussed with Ms Marzec who had not wanted to receive the full salary that Mr Jones had received as CFO as she did not have operational experience.
- Ms Marzec had not taken any additional remuneration for the short period in which she had been interim CFO.
- There had been no changes to Ms Marzec's substantive terms and conditions.
- The PFCC was responsible for deciding the remuneration and other terms and conditions for the appointment and had done so after taking legal and HR advice. He considered that the legal and HR advisors involved had been fully informed about the matters in question.

Decisions regarding a confirmation hearing

The PFCC was asked who had taken the decision to obtain legal advice relating to holding a confirmation hearing for the proposed appointment of an interim CFO,

when the legal advice had been requested and when provided. The PFCC made the following points:

- He had wanted legal advice and had asked Ms Marzec, as OPFCC Monitoring Officer, to obtain it.
- Legal advice had been sought on 27 June 2023 and had been received on the same day. Mr Jones had resigned as CFO on 7 July. Recruitment of a permanent CFO would take at last three months, which showed the need for interim arrangements.

The PFCC was asked what instructions were provided to the lawyer in relation to the nature of the interim CFO role and the period of employment and who provided those instructions. The PFCC advised that emails set out in appendix A to the report presented to the Panel showed the clarification sought from EMPLS. In response to a supplementary question the PFCC subsequently stated that all necessary disclosures had been made about his friendship with Ms Marzec. Many inaccurate comments had been made about this matter: Ms Marzec had never worked for the PFCC's private businesses nor received any money from them.

The PFCC was asked if he had considered whether Ms Marzec would have a conflict of interest through being involved in seeking advice or taking decisions about her own appointment as interim CFO. The PFCC made the following points:

- One of the OPFCC Monitoring Officer's responsibilities was to provide strategic advice to the PFCC. Seeking legal advice was part of doing this. He did not think that this case involved a conflict of interest as Ms Marzec was asking questions on behalf of the PFCC.
- The PFCC had taken all decisions relating to the appointment of Ms Marzec as interim CFO, not Ms Marzec.

The PFCC was asked whether he had read the legal advice received and was satisfied that it had been obtained appropriately and constituted comprehensive advice that he could rely on. The PFCC made the following points:

- EMPLS was a skilled and experienced legal team. He had read the legal advice it had provided and was content with it: otherwise he would not have taken the decision to appoint Ms Marzec as interim CFO.
- He accepted that when legislation was not specific it created the scope for different interpretations. The Panel had received different legal advice on whether the appointment of an interim CFO should be subject to a confirmation hearing. The PFCC could have sought further legal advice but by that point he had already requested the Panel to hold a confirmation hearing.

Panel members asked the PFCC related supplementary questions. The PFCC made the following additional points:

- Action was taken to ensure there was not a conflict between Ms Marzec's substantive and interim roles. Decisions relating to expenditure that were normally delegated to the CFO would have been exercised by the PFCC and the OPFCC Chief Finance Officer whilst the interim appointment was operating.
- He had needed to act at pace when dealing with the situation resulting from Mr Jones's resignation. He had provided the Panel with the legal advice and rationale for decisions about appointing an interim CFO. He had contacted the Panel Chair on 7 July before communications were sent out to NFRS staff

members and the media. With hindsight he should have engaged more with the Panel on this matter, although he had attempted to do this subsequently.

- He did not have the resources to take legal action regarding reporting of his relationship with Ms Marzec. However, he had made a referral to the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

Potential conflicts of interest in relation to the decisions of the PFCC

The PFCC was asked if he had a friendship with Ms Marzec outside their professional relationship and what the nature of that friendship was. The PFCC made the following points:

- He had worked with Ms Marzec for six years and they had an effective working relationship that had produced good results. They had become personal friends with common interests, which he had never sought to hide.
- If he had been aware of gossip and speculation about this friendship he would have given further consideration to the approach taken on this matter in that context.

The PFCC was asked if he had ever had any personal financial or business arrangements with Ms Marzec. The PFCC responded that this had never been the case. He had already declared this as part of the Statement of Accounts for the OPFCC.

The PFCC was asked if he had made any previous decisions that had resulted in promotion, improved terms and conditions or salary increases in relation to Ms Marzec. The PFCC made the following points:

- He had appointed Ms Marzec and Paul Bullen in January 2019 to share the role of OPFCC Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. These appointments had been subject to confirmation hearings by the Panel. Ms Marzec had carried on the role when Mr Bullen had subsequently moved to a new position. This reflected normal practice relating to a job-sharing where one of the parties involved leaves.
- In 2021 he had commissioned an external review of senior management salaries in the OPFCC, which resulted in changes to all salaries.

The PFCC was asked if he had ever declared an interest in relation to decisions he was involved in about the promotion or terms and conditions or performance of Ms Marzec. The PFCC made the following points:

- He declared all interests that he believed to be relevant to his role as PFCC.
- He always had a professional relationship with Ms Marzec and acted in accordance with relevant requirements. He believed that friendships outside of work did not compromise professional relationships.

The PFCC was asked if he considered that he had failed to follow the Nolan Principles or breached the OPFCC Code of Conduct at any time in relation to this matter. The PFCC made the following points:

- He did not consider that he had failed to follow the Nolan Principles or breached the OPFCC Code of Conduct. He took pride in having public trust. He had followed requirements and made decisions in the best interests of residents and services. The decision to appoint Ms Marzec as interim CFO had been taken

impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without bias or discrimination.

- He had spoken with a range of stakeholders following Mr Jones's resignation. He had sought to brief the Panel but this had not been possible. He had then written to Panel members.
- He prided himself on leading by example and treating others with respect. He believed that the decision to appoint Ms Marzec as interim CFO was right. He accepted that the process could have been better and regretted this. He respected the work of frontline staff members and would never seek to undermine them.

Panel members asked the PFCC related supplementary questions. The PFCC made the following additional points:

- The vote of no confidence passed by the FBU did not reflect the response he received when visiting NFRS fire stations.
- The OPFCC Code of Conduct paragraph 6.1 related to permanent appointments. This case concerned an interim arrangement intended to provide cover whilst a permanent CFO was recruited.

Panel members queried when the PFCC had contacted the Chair to inform him of Mr Jones's resignation and the interim arrangements. The Chair made the following points:

- The PFCC had contacted him on 7 July 2023 at around 12.48 pm before issuing a press release at 1.00 pm. It would have been difficult for the Chair to inform other Panel members of the situation in this short period.
- He had contacted the Panel's Monitoring Officer to discuss the situation at the earliest opportunity, on 10 July. It might have been possible to obtain external legal advice for the Panel quicker if this matter had not arisen on a Friday.

The Deputy Chair advised that she had been contacted by the PFCC at a later time on 7 July but had not been involved in the request to obtain legal advice for the Panel.

Actions of the PFCC in relation to the departure of Ms Marzec

The PFCC was asked when and why he had decided not to refer the appointment of Ms Marzec as interim CFO to the Panel for a confirmation hearing. The PFCC made the following points:

- NFRS staff members were advised of Mr Jones's resignation by an email sent on 7 July 2023 at 1.29 pm. A press release was issued at 3.28 pm.
- He had taken the decision that a confirmation hearing was not required based on the legal advice received from EMPLS relating to a temporary acting-up arrangement. He had informed the NFRS leadership team immediately on 7 July and had then spoken to the Panel Chair and Deputy Chair. He had acted quickly to address the need that had arisen.
- With hindsight he should have engaged more with the Panel. He did try to address this by seeking to hold a briefing for Panel members in week commencing 10 July 2023. This had not gone ahead. He understood this was because the Panel's Monitoring Officer had raised concerns about a briefing taking place if a confirmation hearing was subsequently required.

The PFCC was asked whether Ms Marzec had chosen to resign as interim CFO or had been invited to do so and whether Ms Marzec had served her notice period. The PFCC responded that it had been Ms Marzec's decision. The OPFCC had complied with contractual requirements in relation to her departure.

The PFCC was asked whether Ms Marzec had chosen subsequently to resign from her substantive role as OPFCC Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer or had been invited to do so and whether Ms Marzec had served her notice period. The PFCC responded that Ms Marzec had chosen to resign. The OPFCC had complied with contractual requirements in relation to her departure.

Panel members commented that Ms Marzec had done good work on areas including early intervention and her departure was a loss to the OPFCC. The response to her appointment as interim CFO would have been awful to experience and involved an element of sexism. The PFCC should take appropriate responsibility for decisions that had contributed to this situation. The PFCC made the following additional points:

- Ms Marzec had made her own decision to resign but he believed this had been influenced by the level of public speculation about her personal life and the feeling that her professional capability had been insulted. The suggestion that she could only have been appointed interim CFO through nepotism was sexist.
- He agreed that Ms Marzec's resignation was a tragedy for the OPFCC and was not in the interests of Northamptonshire.

The PFCC was asked whether Ms Marzec had received a payment in lieu of notice to settle her departure from her interim or her substantive roles, what the total value of any settlements was in each case and who made the decision about any settlements paid. The PFCC responded that Ms Marzec's departure had been in accordance with her terms and conditions: there was no settlement package. The details were confidential but information would appear in a future Statement of Accounts as required.

In response to a question the PFCC confirmed that Ms Marzec had previously acted up as interim CFO for a short period when Darren Dovey had retired as CFO. Panel members noted that this interim appointment had not been brought to the Panel.

The PFCC's overall reflections

The PFCC was asked what errors he thought he had made in relation to the appointment of the interim CFO and what he would do differently if faced with the same situation in future. The PFCC made the following points:

- With hindsight he would have sought a confirmation hearing on the proposed appointment despite legal advice that this was not necessary. Responding quickly to the situation following Mr Jones's resignation had created the appearance that the process had not been sufficiently transparent.
- Ms Marzec was well-qualified to carry out the role of interim CFO. He did not regret appointing her but regretted the way it had been done.
- He had tried to arrange a briefing for Panel members in week commencing 10 July and had then sought a retrospective confirmation hearing, setting aside the legal advice received by the OPFCC.

- He had contacted the Home Office regarding the question of whether a confirmation hearing was required for interim appointments. The Home Office had confirmed that there was no provision for this. He had shared the response with the Association of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners.

In response to a question the Director Legal and Democratic advised that it would not have been appropriate for Panel members to receive a private briefing from the PFCC on the appointment of an interim CFO given that the Panel might subsequently need to hold a confirmation hearing or other public meeting on this matter. It was important that the Panel followed correct processes.

The PFCC was asked if he understood why concerns had been raised about his actions relating to the appointment of an interim CFO and why questions had been asked about whether he could continue as PFCC. The PFCC made the following points:

- He understood that there were many strands of opposition to the appointment that he had sought to make.
- He wished that he had engaged with the Panel more in relation to the appointment, to enable it to assess Ms Marzec's capabilities to carry out the role of interim CFO.
- He regretted that Ms Marzec had been denigrated by comments that she had no relevant experience for the role of interim CFO when this was not the case.
- He recognised that the FBU was opposed to direct entry to senior positions in Fire and Rescue services.
- He had not been aware of gossip and speculation about his friendship with Ms Marzec. If he had been aware he would definitely have requested a confirmation hearing to ensure transparency. He had subsequently sought to do this but Ms Marzec had resigned before a confirmation hearing could have been convened.
- He valued the work of the Panel and was disappointed if the recent situation had undermined the good relationship that he had with it.
- He accepted the public concerns about the recent situation and admitted that the process he had followed could have been better.

In response to a question arising from the points raised by public speakers the PFCC stated that Ms Marzec's substantive workplace had been Darby House, Wellingborough. Since the COVID-19 pandemic OPFCC staff members had been able to work remotely. Ms Marzec had sometimes worked from the PFCC's office in Brackmills. This had been declared as necessary and the office had appropriate security arrangements. When Ms Marzec had worked from this office she had absolutely been carrying out OPFCC business.

The Chair invited the PFCC to make any final comments to the Panel. The PFCC made the following points:

- He regretted the process followed for the appointment that had got to the current position. If he could make the appointment again he would appoint the same person but do so differently.
- The only outcome he had sought from the appointment was to benefit NFRS and Northamptonshire residents.
- When he had taken responsibility for the governance of NFRS it had been in a very difficult financial position, with no reserves or capital programme. Since

then, he had increased its budget by around £8m per year and invested in the capital programme. NFRS had been able to recruit firefighters and had acquired its first new fire appliances in 10 years.

- There was further work still to do. He would continue to advocate for NFRS and wanted it to have the leadership it deserved. He would seek to raise the bar in relation to addressing the issues that NFRS still faced.

In response to a question the PFCC stated that he agreed with the commissioner fire and rescue authority governance model but also recognised that there were other models that could meet local needs in different areas.

The Chair highlighted that the Panel had now reached the end of the information-gathering phase of the meeting and would move on to consider potential conclusions and recommendations. The Chair thanked the PFCC for his attendance.

[The meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes at this point. The PFCC left during the adjournment and returned to the meeting when the Panel reached a resolution].

The Chair invited the Panel to consider potential conclusions arising from the information it had gathered and any resulting resolutions or recommendations. Panel members made the following points during the course of discussion:

- Questions had been raised about the appointment of Ms Marzec as interim CFO on the basis that she did not have operational experience. The 2021 annual report by the Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services supported direct entry. The Fire and Rescue National Framework did not require CFOs to have operational experience. There were already other Fire and Rescue services with CFOs who had not been firefighters.
- The HMICFRS 2021/22 inspection of NFRS raised the need to change its culture. Mr Jones had been recruited as CFO to do this. The FBU had objected to his appointment and to the subsequent appointment of Ms Marzec. All of the factors that had contributed to the level of opposition needed to be appreciated.
- Information available to the Panel called into question the PFCC's argument that an interim CFO had needed to be appointed quickly ahead of the British Grand Prix. It appeared that the decision to do so was made before this.
- The PFCC had not given clear and full answers to the Panel's questions about when he had first been aware that Mr Jones was considering retiring and the reasons for this. This undermined the Panel and did not provide reassurance.
- The PFCC had stated that matters relating to Mr Jones's departure had to remain confidential. The Panel had no information that called this into question.
- References to other Fire and Rescue services with CFOs who had not been firefighters were misleading as these appointments would have resulted from a recruitment and selection process. Public authorities needed to follow due process.
- It was suggested that the PFCC had breached the OPFCC Code of Conduct paragraph 6.1 by being involved in the appointment of a personal friend.
- Ms Marzec should not have been asked to seek legal advice on a matter that involved her.
- The PFCC had said that he did not have a close personal relationship with Ms Marzec. The only indication to the contrary came from reports in the media. The OPFCC Code of Conduct paragraph 6.1 did not apply.

- There was information that indicated the PFCC had a close personal relationship with Ms Marzec.
- Information seen by the Panel indicated that the PFCC had known about Mr Jones's potential departure before 7 July 2023 and therefore had sufficient time to have informed the Panel earlier.
- It was not democratic that Panel members had found out about Mr Jones's resignation and the appointment of Ms Marzec from the media and then had had to wait two months to scrutinise the matter.
- Ms Marzec had been appointed as the interim CFO. Many points raised at the current meeting related to permanent appointments.
- Communications between the PFCC and the Panel on this matter could have been better.
- The legal advice obtained by the PFCC and the Panel on the question of whether a confirmation hearing was required to appoint an interim CFO had reached different conclusions.
- It was standard business practice for health and financial matters relating to an employee to be confidential.
- The PFCC had said that he made an error of judgement on this matter.
- The Panel could not base its conclusions just on reports in the media.
- The Panel should recommend improvements to communications between the PFCC and the Panel.
- The Panel should recommend training for the PFCC in some aspects of the role. He had been in the role for seven years but requirements did change over time.
- There seemed to be a clear indication that procedures had not been followed in relation to the appointment of Ms Marzec as interim CFO. The PFCC had lost the confidence of firefighters.
- The PFCC had taken advice and had concluded that he could act in a particular way. However, it might be recommended that he should follow processes more closely in future.
- The PFCC's conclusion that he could proceed without a confirmation hearing was wrong and it was unacceptable that he did not recognise this. The argument that a confirmation hearing was not necessary for an interim appointment conflicted with previous practice.
- It was suggested that the PFCC had not abided by the Nolan Principles on this matter.
- The PFCC had held the role for seven years and so should have dealt with this matter better without the benefit of hindsight.
- The PFCC had explained that he had appointed Ms Marzec for an interim period and how she was qualified for the role. He had taken legal advice that a confirmation hearing was not required. He had subsequently been prepared to request a confirmation hearing but Ms Marzec had resigned by that point.
- There was not sufficient evidence to reach a conclusion that the PFCC had breached the Nolan Principles.
- The Panel's role was to act as critical friend. It did not reflect this to call for a vote of no confidence in the PFCC. The Panel should focus on supporting a better approach in the future.
- The PFCC should have regard to public perceptions of the way he carried out his role. The PFCC also needed to maintain the trust and confidence of NFRS and Northamptonshire Police personnel.

- The full process for appointments to statutory positions should be followed whether an appointment was permanent or interim. This had not been done in this case.
- The PFCC had stated that he was friends with Ms Marzec outside of work. This did not reflect the importance of separation between the PFCC and the OPFCC Monitoring Officer. It could also have made it more difficult for the individual to carry out their role of advising the PFCC.
- The Panel should not discount media reporting in considering its conclusions on this matter and should recognise the level of concern that had been raised.
- The Home Office needed to give clear guidance about whether interim appointments to statutory positions should be subject to a confirmation hearing.
- All Panel members were likely to support the principle that both interim and permanent appointments to statutory positions should be subject to confirmation hearings in future. The Panel could recommend that this be done in future.
- The PFCC had apologised for the situation that had occurred and acknowledged that in retrospect he should have requested a confirmation hearing for the appointment of Ms Marzec as interim CFO. Ultimately, this was a relatively small mistake that was not grounds for resignation or a vote of no confidence by the Panel.
- NFRS was in a stronger position now than when responsibility for it was transferred from Northamptonshire County Council to the PFCC. The PFCC governance model was instrumental in this. Some did not like the model but it had worked in Northamptonshire.
- The Panel should also learn from recent experience where necessary. The Chair and Deputy Chair should have informed other Panel members about the information given by the PFCC on 7 July 2023.
- It was not acceptable that the PFCC had twice made interim appointments to statutory positions without involving the Panel.
- Northamptonshire voters would be able to have their say on the current PFCC at the election in eight months' time.

The Director Legal and Democratic provided advice during the course of discussion as follows:

- Codes of conduct generally contained a provision like that in the OPFCC Code of Conduct paragraph 6.1. The individual concerned needed to take a view, informed by advice, about the nature of their connection with the other party. A friendship could constitute a close personal relationship. It was ultimately a matter of individual judgement.
- The current meeting was not a conduct hearing. The Panel should focus on considering whether there were any areas for improvement in the way that the PFCC had carried out his functions and, if so, on making recommendations intended to address them.
- Formally, the Panel's role was to scrutinise and support the PFCC not to hold to account the PFCC.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised during discussion that any conclusions reached by the Panel needed to be objective and evidence based. If the Panel reached conclusions that were open to challenge this risked undermining the outcomes that the Panel was trying to achieve.

The Chair acknowledged points raised during discussion about communication within the Panel. When elected to the position in June 2023 he had spoken about the opportunity for the Panel to do more training and to have more regular engagement with NFRS and Northamptonshire Police. More continuity and more connections between Panel members in the time between Panel meetings would be generally beneficial.

Mr Taylor requested an opportunity to reply to issues relating to firefighters that had been raised during the meeting. The Chair responded that the current meeting was not the right forum for a wider discussion but another opportunity might be arranged. The Director Legal and Democratic further advised that the Panel should not treat one public speaker differently to others.

After all Panel members had had the opportunity to comment Mrs Shields proposed and Councillor McGhee seconded a motion that the Panel agree it had no confidence in the PFCC's ability to carry out his role with impartiality.

On being put to the vote there were three votes in favour, seven votes against and one abstention. The motion was therefore not carried.

Councillor Irwin proposed a motion stating that the Panel notes the error of judgement made by the PFCC in respect of a recent appointment. The Panel is disappointed that reputational damage has been done to the PFCC's office. The Panel invites the PFCC to outline how he will amend his approach to communications in future so that probity in process is transparent and that all due procedures will be followed. This was seconded by Councillor Gonzalez De Savage.

The Director Legal and Democratic advised the Panel to consider positively identifying the specific actions that it thought should be taken rather than leaving this to the PFCC to determine. The Chair noted that specific actions could be added to the proposal that had been made. Panel members subsequently commented that recommendations should include the production of an action plan setting out responses to particular actions, which could then be monitored by the Panel.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager summarised potential resolutions arising from the discussion, which were considered and refined by the Panel as follows:

The Panel notes the error of judgement made by the PFCC in respect of a recent appointment. The Panel is disappointed that reputational damage has been done to the PFCC's office. The Panel recommends actions in the following areas:

- *Improved communications between the PFCC and the Panel*
- *Training for the Commissioner in relation to the OPFCC Code of Conduct*
- *The addition to the OPFCC Code of Conduct paragraph 6.3 (Appointment and other Employment Matters) of a specific definition of 'close personal relationships'*
- *The addition to the NFRS Recruitment and Selection procedures paragraph 6.4 (Exceptions to the requirement to advertise a vacancy) of more precise wording regarding the process for dealing with temporary appointments*

- *The production by the PFCC of an action plan dealing with these areas that is reported back to the Panel.*

The Panel writes to the Home Office regarding the need for clarity about whether interim appointments by PFCCs to the positions of chief constable, chief fire officer, deputy commissioner, chief executive of the commissioner's office and chief finance officer of the commissioner's office should be subject to confirmation hearings by the relevant panel.

The Panel expects interim appointments by the PFCC to the positions of Chief Constable, Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Executive of the Commissioner's Office and Chief Finance Officer of the OPFCC to be subject to confirmation hearings in future.

The Panel agrees to hold a future meeting with the PFCC and Fire Brigades Union representatives.

The Chair proposed that the Panel also resolve to recommend that the PFCC recognise and acknowledge the importance of the discussion at the current meeting.

On being put to the vote there were nine votes in favour, one against and one abstention. It was therefore:

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel notes the error of judgement made by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in respect of a recent appointment. The Panel is disappointed that reputational damage has been done to the Commissioner's office. The Panel recommends actions in the following areas:
 - Improved communications between the Commissioner and the Panel
 - Training for the Commissioner in relation to the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Code of Conduct
 - The addition to the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Code of Conduct paragraph 6.3 (Appointment and other Employment Matters) of a specific definition of 'close personal relationships'
 - The addition to the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service Recruitment and Selection procedures paragraph 6.4 (Exceptions to the requirement to advertise a vacancy) of more precise wording regarding the process for dealing with temporary appointments.
 - The production by the Commissioner of an action plan dealing with these areas that is reported back to the Panel.
- b) The Panel writes to the Home Office regarding the need for clarity about whether interim appointments by police, fire and crime commissioners to the positions of chief constable, chief fire officer, deputy commissioner, chief executive of the commissioner's office and chief finance officer of the commissioner's office should be subject to confirmation hearings by the relevant police, fire and crime panel.
- c) The Panel expects interim appointments by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to the positions of Chief Constable, Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Executive of the Commissioner's Office and Chief Finance

Officer of the Commissioner's Office to be subject to confirmation hearings in future.

- d) The Panel agrees to hold a future meeting with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Fire Brigades Union representatives.
- e) The Panel recommends that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner recognises and acknowledges the importance of the discussion that has taken place at the current meeting.

The Chair thanked all present for their participation in the meeting.

The PFCC thanked the Panel for its time and would consider and respond to its recommendations. The PFCC also thanked FBU representatives and members of the public for their contributions at the meeting.

177. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 5.30 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
POLICE, FIRE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER

Stephen Mold

Darby House, Darby Close,
Park Farm Industrial Estate,
Wellingborough, NN8 6GS

Cllr David Smith
Chair
Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel

By Email: David.Smith@westnorthants.gov.uk

21 November 2023

Dear David,

Panel Recommendations

I apologise for the delay in responding to the recommendations in your report of September 19. I assure you that I take this matter extremely seriously, and I have reflected at length on the issues that have been raised, and my relationship with you and the Panel.

I will address each of the points that you raised in turn.

5.14 At the conclusion of discussion, the Panel resolved that:

**a) the Panel notes the error of judgement made by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in respect of a recent appointment. The Panel is disappointed that reputational damage has been done to the Commissioner's office. The Panel recommends actions in the following areas:
Improved communications between the Commissioner and the Panel.**

I will work even harder to communicate and engage with the Panel. I have been clear that I regret the process I followed in the summer and with hindsight, I should have engaged with the Panel at a much earlier stage. I understand that it would have been in everyone's interests had I discussed my plans and reasoning as soon as I could and sought the Panel's views on the process.

I have been in regular communication with the Panel since that time, regarding the appointments that have now been or are being made. You have my commitment that my office and I will engage sooner, and better, in future.

Having an open and honest dialogue is in everyone's interests. I have always tried to provide briefings and to keep you informed and I will ensure that my team do better at this.

- **Training for the Commissioner in relation to the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Code of Conduct**

I have, with my Monitoring Officer, re-read and reflected on the code of conduct. I can assure you that I have refreshed my understanding of what the Code of Conduct requires.

I will ensure that the Monitoring Officer regularly reviews the Code of Conduct to ensure it remains current.

I hope this meets the intention of your recommendation.

- **The addition to the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Code of Conduct paragraph 6.3 (Appointment and other Employment Matters) of a specific definition of ‘close personal relationships’**

This will be done.

The Monitoring Officer is reviewing other Codes of Conduct to find good practice, so that a suitable, clear definition on what constitutes a ‘close personal relationship’ may be added.

I will write to you again to inform you when this has been updated.

- **The addition to the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service Recruitment and Selection procedures paragraph 6.4 (Exceptions to the requirement to advertise a vacancy) of more precise wording regarding the process for dealing with temporary appointments.**

This is being done.

When the section has been reworded, it will need to be subject to the appropriate internal consultation before it is included in a revised procedure, at which point I will write to you again to inform you that it has been updated.

- **The production by the Commissioner of an action plan dealing with these areas that is reported back to the Panel.**

Please consider this letter to be that action plan – I will summarise the actions that have been or are being taken against your recommendations at the end.

- b) The Panel writes to the Home Office regarding the need for clarity about whether interim appointments by police, fire, and crime commissioners to the positions of chief constable, chief fire officer, deputy commissioner, chief executive of the commissioner’s office and chief finance officer of the commissioner’s office should be subject to confirmation hearings by the relevant police, fire and crime panel.**

This is an action for the Panel.

- c) The Panel expects interim appointments by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to the positions of Chief Constable, Chief Fire Officer, Deputy**

Commissioner, Chief Executive of the Commissioner's Office and Chief Finance Officer of the Commissioner's Office to be subject to confirmation hearings in future.

I have committed to involving and engaging with you about the process to be followed in appointing interims. However, I have recently had clarity from the Home Office that the appointment of an interim Chief Constable is exempted from the need for a confirmation hearing when the interim is the serving Deputy Chief Constable. I attach that guidance for you here.

d) The Panel agrees to hold a future meeting with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Fire Brigades Union representatives.

This is a decision for the Panel to take. I am sure the Panel will consider also that there are other Trades Unions and staff associations representing employees in Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, as there are for Northamptonshire Police officers and staff.

e) The Panel recommends that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner recognises and acknowledges the importance of the discussion that has taken place at the current meeting.

I assure you in the strongest possible terms that I recognise the importance of the discussion that has taken place.

I have always aimed to have a positive and constructive relationship with the Panel and its members. I take my role as an elected representative very seriously and I have the utmost respect for the democratic role of the Panel to challenge me as a critical friend.

I have spent a long time reflecting on what happened. I say again that I would reserve my right to make the same appointment, but I would do it differently. I regret how the matter has been used for many different political ends, and the damage that has been caused.

I want only to ensure that the passionate, committed staff of both Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and Northamptonshire Police have the best leaders so that they can do the best for the people of this county.

I welcome the opportunity to involve you more closely in the future and I assure you that I will do.

From the above, my action plan is:

- To review and refresh my understanding of the Code of Conduct - I have done so.
- To ensure that the Code of Conduct is regularly reviewed and updated by the Monitoring Officer.
- To add a definition of 'close personal relationships' – this is in hand, and I will confirm to you when it is done.
- To write to you when a paragraph has been added to the Recruitment and Selection Procedures – this is in hand, and I will confirm to you when it is done.
- I attach the guidance on the appointment of an interim Chief Constable who is a serving Deputy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Mold', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Mold
Northamptonshire Police & Fire Crime Commissioner

Appointment of Acting Chief Constable

Extract from an email exchange with colleagues at the Home Office in relation to confirmation hearings for temporary appointments of a chief constable:

I am emailing following our discussions and the PFCC's communication with the Minister's office about whether there is a need to undertake a confirmation hearing process, for the temporary appointment of a Chief Constable. We have reviewed the legislation and, though we cannot give legal advice, in our view there is no requirement for the panel to be consulted. There is a specific provision for interim arrangements (Section 41 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011) which enables the Deputy Chief Constable to "act up" for an interim period. This is separate to Section 38 of the same Act, which sets out the process for substantive Chief Constable appointments, for which a confirmation hearing must be held.

This is different to the position with regard to the appointment of a Chief Fire Officer. Legislation on that issue does not contain a provision equivalent to section 41 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. In the absence of such provision, it is our view that appointment of an interim CFO must follow the same process as for permanent appointments.

Section 41 of Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 [emphasis added]

41 Power of deputy to exercise functions of chief constable

(1) The appropriate deputy chief constable of a police force may exercise or perform any or all of the functions of the chief constable of the force—

- (a) during any period when the chief constable is unable to exercise functions, or**
- (b) at any other time, with the consent of the chief constable.**

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the appropriate deputy chief constable is—

- (a) if the police force has only one deputy chief constable, the deputy chief constable;**
- (b) if the police force has more than one deputy chief constable, the most senior deputy chief constable.**

(3) If the police force has more than one deputy chief constable, the chief constable must designate the deputy chief constables in order of seniority for the purposes of subsection [\(2\)\(b\)](#).

(4) During any absence, incapacity or suspension from duty of the person who—

- (a) is designated as the most senior deputy chief constable for the purposes of subsection [\(2\)\(b\)](#),**
- or**

- (b) is treated under this section as the most senior deputy chief constable, the person designated as the next most senior deputy chief constable is to be treated as the most senior one for the purposes of subsection [\(2\)\(b\)](#).
- (5) The assistant chief constable designated for this purpose by the chief constable of the force may exercise any or all of the chief constable's functions during any period when—
 - (a) the chief constable is unable to exercise functions, and
 - (b) a deputy chief constable is unable to exercise functions.
- (6) The chief constable of the force must designate an assistant chief constable of the force for the purposes of subsection [\(5\)](#).
- (7) Only one person is authorised to act at any one time by virtue of a designation by the chief constable.
- (8) The chief constable must consult the relevant police and crime commissioner before making a designation for the purposes of subsection [\(2\)\(b\)](#) or [\(5\)](#).
- (9) This section is without prejudice to any other enactment that makes provision for a person other than the chief constable to exercise the chief constable's functions.
- (10) In a case where a deputy chief constable or assistant chief constable (the “acting chief constable”) is authorised by subsection (1)(a) or (5) to exercise or perform functions of a chief constable—
 - (a) section 38(2) and (3) apply in relation to the acting chief constable as they apply in relation to the chief constable (and references to chief constables in those provisions, and in other enactments relating to those provisions, are to be read accordingly); and
 - (b) section 39(4) and (5) or section 40(3) and (4) do not apply in relation to the acting chief constable.
- (11) In this section—
 - (a) “police force” means the police force for a police area listed in Schedule 1 to the Police Act 1996 (police areas outside London);
 - (b) **a reference to a period when the chief constable is unable to exercise functions is a reference to a period when—**
 - (i) **the chief constable is absent, incapacitated or suspended from duty,** or
 - (ii) the office of chief constable is vacant;

- (c) a reference to a period when a deputy chief constable is unable to exercise functions is a reference to a period when—
 - (i) the deputy chief constable, or each of the deputy chief constables, is absent, incapacitated or suspended from duty, or
 - (ii) the office of deputy chief constable, or of each deputy chief constable, is vacant.

This page is intentionally left blank



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

30 NOVEMBER 2023

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 OF THE JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. Introduction

The Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) provides independent assurance that adequate corporate and strategic risk management arrangements are in place for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire (PFCC – acting as PFCC and NCFRA) and the Chief Constable (CC). It jointly advises the PFCC and the CC on governance matters as well as good practices.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) guidance, recommends that the JIAC report annually on how they have discharged their duties and responsibilities.

This report provides the PFCC and CC with a summary of the Committee's activities in the financial year 2022/23. It also seeks to provide assurance that the Committee has fulfilled its terms of reference, and added value to the overall governance arrangements that were in place for both the PFCC and the CC.

The Committee wishes to record its gratitude to the Chief Officers from Police and Fire for their constant support and to the staff of all three organisations who have attended JIAC meetings and who ensure that it has been able to carry out its business efficiently. To this list I would like to add Internal Audit and External Audit who have assisted the Committee to fulfil its role.

I would like to record my thanks to them and my fellow JIAC members for their wise advice and invaluable efforts throughout this year. Steps are being taken to appoint a new member to bring the JIAC to full compliment.

2. Role of the Committee

The current purpose of the Committee is:

‘To support the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to discharge their responsibilities by providing independent assurance on the adequacy of their corporate governance, risk management arrangements and the associated control environments and the integrity of financial statements and reporting.’

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in his role as corporation sole for both PFCC and NCFRA.

This is the tenth Annual Report of the JIAC and it sets out how the Committee fulfilled its purpose and responsibilities in 2022/23

The JIAC seeks to provide independent assurance to the three organisations through a review of:

- Corporate Governance
- Internal Control Environment
- Corporate Risk Management
- Regulatory Framework
- Internal Audit
- External Audit
- External Financial Reporting
- Updates on Inspections and Reviews (HMICFRS)
- Counter Fraud

It will seek assurance on the effective and timely implementation of recommendations and action plans.

The JIAC provides the independent assurance function to the PFCC and should discharge the responsibilities of the PFCC (acting as PFCC and NCFRA) and the CC in independent assurance. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) provides guidance on the function and operation of Police Audit Committees and sets criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the JIAC, which forms an integral part of this report.

Additionally, this report provides the PFCC and CC with a summary of the areas of work considered by the JIAC during the year ended 31st March 2023. This is in line with the CIPFA guidance that recommends that Audit Committees should report annually on how they have discharged their responsibilities.

The full responsibilities of the JIAC are contained in its Terms of Reference in Appendix 1.

3. Committee Membership

Membership of the Committee during the financial year was:

Name	Appointment	Qualifications
Ann Battom (Chair)	Appointed December 2018	CIPFA, MSc
John Holman	Appointed 23 rd September 2019	TD MA MRICS
Edith Watson	Appointed 23 rd September 2019	MBA
Alicia Bruce	Appointed 1 st May 2022	FCCA FCMI CMgr

4. Meetings

The Committee met on 4 occasions during the financial year. Meetings are open to the public with minutes being published on the PFCC website.

During the year we had hybrid meetings, i.e. in person and online, with the PFCC and CC, and both the Internal and External Auditors. These meetings have worked very well, enabling our full programme of work to be concluded safely.

From July 2023 meetings will be predominantly in person although allowing for online attendance where necessary.

5. Terms of Reference

The JIAC Terms of Reference follow CIPFA guidance and the formal annual review forms part of this report. Details of the current Terms of Reference can be found on the PFCC website and in Appendix 1. This report also constitutes the annual review of the Terms of Reference.

The JIAC covers three organisations: the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC), the Force and the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA). The Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) is part of NCFRA.

The Committee believes it met the requirements of the Terms of Reference, both in terms of relevant agenda items and the effectiveness of its review.

The committee's work and scope is now well established, the Terms of Reference were reviewed as part of the recruitment process for both the new JIAC chair, and additional JIAC members in 2021. The updated terms of reference are attached and reflect the annual review for 2021/22. The 2022/23 review has identified no further changes.

6. How the Committee discharges its responsibilities

The JIAC meets at least 4 times a year and has a schedule of matters to be considered at each meeting. Internal and external audit activity is reviewed at every meeting.

The attendance of JIAC Committee members at meetings was as follows:

Name	Attendance / Possible attendance
Ann Battom	4/4
John Holman	4/4
Edith Watson	4/4
Alicia Bruce	4/4

The Committee's meetings have been well supported by officers from the Force, OPFCC and the FRS. The excellent quality and timeliness of reports facilitates good, well-informed discussions. In addition, the Committee has appreciated the open and transparent approach of officers.

In addition, representatives of the Internal Auditors and the External Auditor attended the meetings and the Committee took the opportunity as it felt necessary to discuss topics in private with the auditors without officers being present.

The JIAC has received regular reports on:

- the Statement of Accounts (2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22);
- risk management and risk registers;
- treasury management;
- internal and external audit plans, recommendations and updates on progress; and
- updates on the inspectorate (HMICFRS) reports and recommendations.

It has also received updates or sought extra assurance on areas of specific risk or concern, including:

- Transition from Multi Force Shared Services (MFSS) and Local Government Shared Services (LGSS) to the new in-house Police (and in April 2023 Fire) financial systems;
- Enabling Services and Future Systems Update
- Future Internal and External Audit Arrangements;
- Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan update and timetable;
- Corruption and fraud controls and processes;
- JIAC Recruitment.

The following workshops were held:

- July 2022 – Induction / JIAC member briefing.
- November 2022 - Fire Accounts; and
- November 2022 - Police Accounts.
- February 2023 – Risk Management Workshop

The two internal audit teams have successfully delivered almost a full program of reviews.

The Committee continues to gain significant assurance from both the reports and officers. Key topics and issues are set out below. However the members of the Committee appreciate the openness of the officers to discuss all areas of the business and willingness to respond to questions.

7. Assessment of the Audit Committee's performance against its plan and terms of reference

The Committee is keen to be effective and in particular make a positive and constructive contribution to the work of the PFCC, CC and NFRA and the achievement of their strategic priorities.

The Committee's aims and objectives for 2022/23 are set out in Appendix 2. Four of the five objectives have been completed. The first objective – a review of organisational effectiveness across the three organisations will continue into 2023 due to the embedding of new procedures and processes from the future system changes.

Appendix 3 sets out the objectives for 2023/24. There are some key areas which the Committee will keep under review including keeping updated on the embedded enabling services support services and statutory accounts. The agreed work programme covers all core areas and increasingly reports now cover all three organisations in a single document. This has reduced pressure on the agenda for meetings, which gives the Committee space to explore assurance in other areas ; these will be discussed with officers.

8. Identification of key topics and issues

During 2022/23 the Committee considered a range of topics and issues including:

Annual Accounts 2020/21 and 2021/22– frustratingly the delays, resourcing issues and missed deadlines from external auditors Ernst Young as experienced last year continued throughout 2022 and are still a problem at the time of writing this report.

Just when we hoped that audit work was complete, changes to our EY senior audit management resulted in further reviews which once again impacted negatively on the sign off timeline.

All Finance staff worked extremely hard to ensure that audit queries and additional requests were answered promptly, despite the on-going disruption to finance business as usual.

JAC have made their concerns known in local and national forums and are aware that this issue is not ours alone – unbelievably we are in a slightly better position than some of our counterparts across the country. In order to fulfil its obligations around scrutiny and assurance the JAC reviewed draft Annual Accounts 2021/22 for both Police and Fire in November 2022, on the understanding that the external audit work was substantially, if not fully, complete for Fire for 2021/22, and that the audit work for Police for 2020/21 was well underway and any potential outstanding issues were known.

NCFRA Accounts 2021/22 were finally signed off in June 2023 and PFCC and CC accounts for 2021/22 are anticipated to follow in the near future.

The committee recognises the hard work of officers in maintaining a good working relationship with the external audit team members throughout this challenging situation.

During the year a contract procurement process by PSAA for future external audit provision was undertaken, the result of which is a change in our providers. With effect from the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts, Grant Thornton will undertake external audit work for all three organisations. The committee are hopeful that deadlines will return to more acceptable timeframes, however we are mindful that the backlog for Police and auditor changes and handovers may increase risk and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Future Systems – Embedding the future systems arrangements implemented for policing, in place of those delivered by the Multi Force Shared Service (MFSS), as from 1st April 2022 continued, together with assurance on the implementation which has been a critical work stream during this financial year.

The JIAC have required and received, regular updates on progress and associated risks during the year. Enabling Services are now embedded and a review 2020-2023 will be considered by the Committee in July 2023.

In terms of future systems, Police future systems were successfully implemented by 1st April 2022 and the financial system transition to include Fire from 1st April 2023 was implemented as planned. HR and payroll services for Fire will transition by 1st April 2024.

Progress during the year has been steady. The JIAC have received an update on the assurance in terms of the implementation of the future systems arrangements and have focused on the outcomes of a benefits realisation exercise.

The JIAC will continue seek assurance in respect of the future systems implementation and embedding for Fire in 2023/24.

Risk management – the Committee had an in depth workshop on risk which covered all areas of risk, including the appetite for risk, risk evaluation and importantly the mechanisms for the escalation of risks.

Risk management processes are well established and the joint risk register is regularly monitored (including by the JIAC). The transitioning of Fire to the current risk system is planned for April 2023.

The fluctuating political and local landscape continues to create new risks and/ or increase existing risks. Officers have provided in depth information on how such risks are managed and mitigated if possible, from which the JIAC has gained assurance.

Capital programme – there is a comprehensive capital programme for both Police and Fire. This is supported by the Digital and Estates strategies. It also provides an important input to the Treasury Management Strategy and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Medium term financial plan (MTFP) – during the year the JIAC received a report on the MTFP and the detailed timescale and strategy, which supported the plan.

Governance framework – The JIAC considered and supported the Internal Audit plans for the year in June 2022 and progress in delivering that plan so far, has been good. Progress reports on the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations are reviewed at JIAC meetings to ensure that actions are completed in a timely fashion.

The JIAC consider and place reliance on the annual Internal audit assessments of the Chief Internal Auditors for all three organisations. Taking their assessments into account and the additional areas considered by them. Taking all the above into account the JIAC is of the view that there is a broadly effective governance and control regime in place within the OPFCC, NCFRA and the Force.

Specifically, the JIAC believe that the current arrangements for internal audit remain constructive and effective and expect that the consistency of provider for all three organisations going forward will be positive.

Significant improvements are still required in the delivery of the external audit service by Ernst Young in 2022-23 and a timely handover to Grant Thornton in 2023 will bring the external audit of the financial statements back to a more acceptable timeframe. The JIAC continues to give this matter close attention.

9. Assessment of Internal Audit

PFCC and CC

Mazars were appointed as the internal auditor for four years with effect from 1 April 2017 following a successful submission.

The internal audit plan for 2022/23 was approved by the JIAC and the Committee recommended the Commissioner and the Chief Constable to sign off the plan. Progress against the audit plan has been good.

Where Internal Audit recommendations have been made the Force and OPFCC have accepted the recommendation unless good justifiable reasons exist for not acceptance, such instances are the exception. In the majority of instances managers have progressed the agreed actions to the agreed timescale.

The Committee receives regular update reports on the progress of agreed actions, taking specific interest in actions where implementation dates are moved out or exceeded.

The internal audit service was re-tendered in 2022/23 by Derbyshire on behalf of the region. Northamptonshire Chief Finance Officers were an integral part of the process and our JIAC Chair was included in the local assessment of candidates' submissions.

Mazars were re-appointed as the internal auditor for four years with effect from 1st April 2023 for both OPFCC and CC following a successful submission.

NCFRA

The internal audit of NCFRA was undertaken by Milton Keynes Internal Audit Service for 2022/23.

The internal audit plan for NCFRA was approved at the March 2022 JIAC meeting and the Committee recommended the Commissioner to sign off the plan. Progress against the Audit Plan has been good. The Committee has monitored progress on the audit report recommendations for the Service and has taken assurance from the progress made to date.

Due to the planned expiry of the existing NCFRA internal audit contract the organization was included in the tendering process detailed above. Following a successful bid Mazars were appointed as the internal auditor for four years with effect from 1st April 2023. This will provide continuity of internal audit service across all three organisations.

10. Assessment of External Audit

Paragraph seven above comments on the late conclusion of the external audit of the statutory accounts.

The Committee has received updates where the PFCC, NCFRA and CC have explored the possibility of tendering independently or with a group of similar organisations for future external audit provision. There has been no appetite from others to adopt this approach and the cons of making an individual tender are significant. With reluctance, given the recent history of performance, the PFCC, NCFRA and CC once again joined the national consortium for the next tender process.

Locally, whilst subject to a number of staffing changes, the external audit team has been thorough and engagement has remained positive and constructive, however the timing and fees associated with the delivery of the audit work have continued to be below expectations which remains a significant cause of concern to the Committee.

11. Looking forward

Appendix 3 sets out the draft Aims and Priorities for the Committee for 2023/24

These reflect:

- Any outstanding recommendations from 2022/23
- Known areas of concern / high risk; and
- Emerging areas or change programmes likely to be related to the control framework.

12. Conclusion

The Committee has an effective work programme based on robust governance frameworks across the three organisations.

The Committee is grateful to officers who have provided honest and objective assurance about the arrangements which exist, and especially to the Finance teams including the statutory officers all of whom have been put under additional pressure throughout the last year because of the protracted audit timetable.

The JIAC will continue to undertake the responsibilities assigned to it in the agreed terms of reference and seek to ensure that it makes a constructive contribution to achieving the agreed priorities. It is important that the JIAC adds value to the organisations in discharging its responsibilities and so will continue to assess its own effectiveness.

A Battom
Chair of Joint Independent Audit Committee

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHIEF CONSTABLE AND
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMISSIONER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 Purpose

To support the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to discharge their responsibilities by providing independent assurance on the adequacy of their corporate governance, risk management arrangements and the associated control environments and the integrity of financial statements and reporting.

2 Membership

- a) The Commissioner, Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer (acting on behalf of NCFRA) jointly will appoint the Committee.
- b) The Committee shall consist of no fewer than five members.
- c) A quorum shall be two members.
- d) At least one member shall be a CCAB qualified accountant with recent and relevant financial experience
- e) The Commissioner, Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer jointly will appoint the Chair of the Committee, following discussion with the members of the Committee.
- f) The Chair shall normally be a CCAB qualified accountant, with recent and relevant financial experience.
- g) Members shall normally be appointed for a period of up to four years, extendable by no more than one additional three-year period, so long as members continue to be independent.
- h) In the absence of the Chair at any meeting of the Committee, the members attending the meeting will elect a Chair for the meeting.

3 Secretary of the Committee

The Monitoring Officer of the Commission will nominate an officer from the Commissioner's Office to act as Secretary to the Committee.

4 Frequency of Meetings

- a) Meetings shall be held at least four times each year, timed to align with the financial reporting cycle.
- b) Extra-ordinary meetings can be held for specific purposes at the discretion of the Chair.
- c) External or internal auditors may request the Chair to call a meeting if they consider one is necessary.

5 Protocols for Meetings

- a) Agenda and supporting papers will be circulated to members at least five working days prior to any meeting.

- b) Where possible, minutes/actions shall be prepared and distributed to members of the Committee, regular attendees and the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer in draft, unapproved format within 10 working days of the meeting.
- c) All papers/minutes should be read prior to the meeting and the meeting will be conducted on this basis with papers being introduced concisely.
- d) It is expected that all actions are reviewed prior to the meeting and updates provided even if individuals cannot attend the meeting.
- e) The Chair of the Committee shall draw to the attention of the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer any issues that require disclosure or require executive action.

f) QUESTIONS AND ADDRESSES BY THE PUBLIC

i. General

Members of the public, with the permission of the Chair of the Committee, may ask questions of members of the Committee, or may address the Committee, on an item on the public part of the agenda.

ii. Order of questions and address

(a) Questions will be asked and addresses given in the order notice of them was received, except that the Chair of the Committee may group together similar questions or addresses.

(b) A list of questions and addresses of which notice has been given shall be circulated to members of the Committee at or before the meeting.

iii. Notice of questions and addresses

A question may only be asked or an address given if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Monitoring Officer no later than noon two working days before the meeting. Each notice of a question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the person to whom it is to be put, and the nature of the question to be asked. Each notice of an address must give the name and address of the persons who will address the meeting and the purpose of the address.

iv. Scope of questions and addresses

The Chair of the Committee may reject a question or address if it:

- Is not about a matter for which the Committee has a responsibility or which affects Northamptonshire;
- is defamatory, frivolous, offensive or vexatious;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put or an address made by some other person at the same meeting of the Committee or at another meeting of the Committee in the past six months; or
- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

v. Asking the question or making the address at the meeting

The Chair of the Committee will invite the questioner to put the question to the person named in the notice. Alternatively, the Chair of the Committee will invite an address to the Committee for a period not exceeding three minutes. Every question must be put and answered without discussion but the person to whom the question has been put may decline to answer it or

deal with it by a written answer. Every address must be made without discussion.

6 Attendance at Meetings

- a) The Committee may invite any person to attend its meetings.
- b) The Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer shall be represented at each meeting of the Committee.
- c) The Commissioner's representation will normally comprise the statutory officers and/or appropriate deputies;
- d) The Chief Constable shall normally be represented by the Deputy Chief Constable of the Force, and / or deputies;
- e) The Chief Fire Officer shall normally be represented by an Assistant Chief Fire Officer;
- f) Internal and External auditors will normally attend each meeting of the Committee.
- g) There should be at least one meeting each year where the Committee meets the external and internal auditors without the Commissioner's, Chief Fire Officer's and Chief Constable's officers being present. This need not be the same meeting; and such meetings would usually take place before or after the normal Committee meeting has concluded.

7 Authority

- a) The Committee is authorised by the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to:
 - investigate any activity within its Terms of Reference;
 - seek any information it requires from any employee;
 - obtain outside legal or other independent professional advice;
 - secure the attendance of outsiders with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary;
 - undertake training of its new members as required.
- b) All employees are directed to co-operate with any request made by the Committee.
- c) The Committee may only make decisions within the remit set out in these Terms of Reference. The Committee has no authority to reverse decisions made by the Commissioner, NCFRA or Chief Constable. It has no authority to incur expenditure.

8 Duties

The Committee's scope encompasses:

- the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (including the Fire and Rescue Authority after the transfer of governance on 1 January 2019);
- the interface between the OPFCC and associated bodies and directly controlled / associated companies but not the bodies themselves;
- the Northamptonshire Police Force;
- the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and
- Any collaborative / partnership arrangements involving the OPFCC, Force or NFRS.

The duties of the Committee shall be:

A Corporate Governance, Risk Management, Internal Control and the Regulatory Framework

To support the PFCC, Chief Constable, Chief Fire Officer and statutory officers in ensuring effective governance arrangements are in place and are functioning efficiently and effectively, across the whole of the Commission's, Force's and Service's activities, making any recommendations for improvement, to support the achievement of the organisations' objectives.

Specific annual activities of the Committee will include:

- a) Review of corporate governance arrangements against the 'Good Governance framework';
- b) Consideration of the framework of assurances to assess if it adequately reflects the Commission's, Force's and Service's priorities and risks;
- c) Consideration of the processes for assurances in relation to collaborations, partnerships and outsourced activities.
- d) Consideration of the processes for assurances that support the Annual Governance Statement;
- e) Consideration of VFM arrangements and review of assurances;
- f) To review any issue referred to it by the statutory officers of the Commission, the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- g) To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- h) To be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and policies
- i) Consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.

B External Financial Reporting

To scrutinise the draft statements of accounts and annual governance statements prior to approval by the Commissioner, Chief Constable and NCFRA and publication. The Committee will challenge where necessary the actions and judgments of management, and make any recommendations as appropriate, to ensure the integrity of the statements.

Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- Critical accounting policies and practices, and any changes in them;
- Decisions requiring a significant element of judgment;
- The extent to which the financial statements are affected by unusual transactions in the year and how they are disclosed;
- The clarity of disclosures;
- Significant adjustments resulting from the audit;
- Compliance with accounting standards;
- Compliance with other legal requirements

C Internal Audit

The Committee shall monitor and review the internal audit function to ensure that it meets mandatory Internal Audit Standards and Public Sector Internal Standards and provides appropriate independent assurance to the JIAC, Monitoring Officer of the Commission, the Commissioner, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable.

This will be achieved by:

- a) Overseeing the appointment of the internal auditors and making recommendations to the Commissioner and Chief Constable, who will make the respective appointments;
- b) Consideration of the internal audit strategy and annual plan, and making recommendations as appropriate;
- c) Consideration of the head of internal audit's annual report and opinion, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over corporate governance arrangements, and make recommendations as appropriate;
- d) Consideration of summaries of internal audit reports, and managers' responses, and make recommendations as appropriate;
- e) Consideration of the management and performance of internal audit, and its cost, capacity and capability, in the context of the overall governance and risk management arrangements, and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- f) Consideration of a report from internal audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale and make recommendations as appropriate;
- g) Consideration of the effectiveness of the co-ordination between Internal and External Audit, to optimise the use of audit resources;
- h) Consideration of any issues of resignation or dismissal from the Internal Audit function.

D External Audit

The Committee shall review and monitor External Audit's independence and objectivity and the effectiveness of the audit process.

This will be achieved by consideration of:

- a) the Commission's, Force's and Service's relationships with the external auditor;
- b) proposals made by officers and Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) regarding the appointment, re-appointment and removal of the external auditor;
- c) the qualifications, expertise and resources, effectiveness and independence of the external auditor annually;
- d) the external auditor's annual plan, annual audit letter and relevant specific reports as agreed with the external auditor, and make recommendations as appropriate;
- e) the draft Management Representation letters before authorisation by the Commissioner, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable, giving particular consideration to non-standard issues;
- f) the effectiveness of the audit process;
- g) the effectiveness of relationships between internal and external audit other inspection agencies or relevant bodies;
- h) the Commissioner's and Chief Constable's policies on the engagement of the External Auditors to supply non-audit services, taking into account relevant guidance.

E Other Assurance Functions

The Committee shall review the findings of other significant assurance functions, both internal and external to the organisation.

F Counter Fraud

The Committee shall satisfy itself:

- a) that the Commission, Force and Service have adequate arrangements in place for detecting fraud and preventing bribery and corruption;
- b) that effective complaints and whistle blowing arrangements exist and proportionate and independent investigation arrangements are in place.

9 Reporting

- a) The Chairman shall be entitled to meet with the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer ideally prior to their approving the accounts each year;
- b) The Committee shall annually review its Terms of Reference and its own effectiveness and recommend any necessary changes to the Commissioner and Chief Constable;
- c) The Committee shall prepare a report on its role and responsibilities and the actions it has taken to discharge those responsibilities for inclusion in the annual accounts;
- d) Such a report shall specifically include:
 - A summary of the role of the Committee
 - The names and qualifications of all members of the Committee during the period
 - The number of Committee meetings and attendance by each member; and
 - The way the Committee has discharged its responsibilities
 - An assessment of the Committee's performance against its plan and terms of reference;
 - Identification of the key issues considered by the Committee and those highlighted to the Commissioner, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer
 - An assessment of Internal and external Audit
- e) If the Commissioner and / or the Chief Constable do not accept the Committee's recommendations regarding the appointment, re-appointment or removal of the external auditor the Committee shall include a statement explaining its recommendation and the reasons why the Commissioner / Chief Constable has taken a different stance in its annual report.

10 Standing Agenda Items

The agenda for each meeting of the Committee shall normally include the following:

Procedural items:

Apologies for absence
Declaration of Interests
Minutes of the last meeting
Matters Arising Action Log
Date, time and venue of next meeting

Business items:

Progress Reports

- Internal Audit
- External Audit

Update on implementation of Audit Recommendations

Items for escalation to the Commissioner and / or Chief Constable

Agenda Plan for the next four meetings

11 Accountability

The Committee is accountable to the Commissioner and Chief Constable.

The Joint Independent Audit Committee's – Aims and Objectives 2022/23

Aims and Objectives
Review Organisational effectiveness across the three organisations - i.e. the extent to which the current management structures are fit for purpose and seeking assurance that strategic aims filter through the organisations effectively.
Continue to place importance on the prompt production and audit of the organisations' statutory account
Review action plans and recommendations that come from Governmental reviews,(e.g. Peel and HMICFRS) are implemented in a timely manner, having regard to organisational resources and strategic direction.
Initiate up to 3 reviews in areas of strategic importance in the governance of the organisations. [Note: possible areas – in-house procurement services, Fire Standards and the implications for Fire reform as a result of Government White paper, joint delivery services for police and fire, Digital technology, equality and diversity.
Conclude the JIAC review of effectiveness.

The Joint Independent Audit Committee's – Draft Aims and Objectives 2023/24

Aims and Objectives
Review Organisational effectiveness across the three organisations - i.e. the extent to which the current management structures are fit for purpose and seeking assurance that strategic aims filter through the organisations effectively.
Review the effectiveness of enabling services across the three organisations, seeking assurance that expected outcomes and benefits are being realised, especially in terms of organisational culture.
Continue to place importance on the prompt production and audit of the organisations' statutory accounts
Review action plans and recommendations that come from HMICFRS e.g. Peel and HMICFRS are implemented in line with agreed timescales and standards,
Initiate up to 3 assurance reviews in areas of strategic importance in the governance of the organisations. [Note: possible areas – the implications for Fire cultural reform as a result of government inspection, Joint delivery services for police and fire, Benefits Realisation, Equality and Diversity.
JIAC member recruitment.



Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel

30th November 2023

Office of the Northamptonshire Police Fire & Crime Commissioner

ACTING CHIEF CONSTABLE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Introduction

1.1 This report updates the Panel on arrangements for an Acting Chief Constable for Northamptonshire Police.

2. Background

2.1 As the Panel were made aware on 17th October 2023 the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire, Mr Nick Adderley, was suspended from duty.

2.2 The suspension followed a mandatory referral to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in July 2023, and their subsequent decision to deal with this matter as an independent investigation.

2.3 At the time of writing this report the suspension has been reviewed and remains in place, with a further review due in early December.

2.4 The Police Fire and Crime Commissioner has therefore needed to put temporary arrangements in place to ensure leadership and stability for the Force.

2.5 Following their scrutiny of other temporary senior appointments the Panel had indicated that their expectation would be that all temporary senior appointments would be subject to a confirmation hearing process as required for substantive appointments. There are, however, specific provisions in legislation relating to temporary/acting arrangements for Chief Constables.

3. Legal Context

3.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (PRSRA) contains specific provisions within it relating to Chief Constables as well as Deputy and Assistant Chief Constables.

3.2 Specifically Section 41 of the PRSRA deals with the power to exercise functions of a chief constable. It states (emphasis added):

- (1) **The appropriate deputy chief constable of a police force may exercise or perform any or all of the functions of a chief constable of the force -**
 - (a) **during any period when the chief constable is unable to exercise functions, or**
 - (b) **at any other time, with the consent of the chief constable.**

- (2) **For the purposes of subsection (1), the appropriate deputy chief constable is –**
 - (a) **If the police force has only one deputy chief constable, the deputy chief constable;**
 - (b) **If the police force has more than one deputy chief constable, the most senior deputy chief constable.**

It goes on to state:

(11) In this section –

- (b) a reference to a period when the chief constable is unable to exercise functions is a reference to a period when -
 - (i) The chief constable is absent, incapacitated or **suspended from duty**, or
 - (ii) The office of chief constable is vacant.

4. Home Office view

- 4.1 Knowing about the specific arrangements in the primary legislation, the office engaged with colleagues at the Home Office to gain their understanding of the situation.

- 4.2 The response from the Home Office was as follows:

I am emailing following our discussions and the PFCC's communication with the Minister's office about whether there is a need to undertake a confirmation hearing process, for the temporary appointment of a Chief Constable. We have reviewed the legislation and, though we cannot give legal advice, in our view there is no requirement for the panel to be consulted. There is a specific provision for interim arrangements (Section 41 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011) which enables the Deputy Chief Constable to "act up" for an interim period. This is separate to Section 38 of the same Act, which sets out the process for substantive Chief Constable appointments, for which a confirmation hearing must be held.

This is different to the position with regard to the appointment of a Chief Fire Officer. Legislation on that issue does not contain a provision equivalent to section 41 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. In the absence of such provision, it is our view that appointment of an interim CFO must follow the same process as for permanent appointments.

5. Our Approach

- 5.1 Notwithstanding the view that there is no legislative need to consult with the Panel but recognising the need for transparency and working within the spirit of the Panel's expectations around temporary senior appointments, we want to ensure active engagement, and support, from the Panel for our interim arrangements while the Chief Constable is suspended.
- 5.2 We have already engaged with the Chair prior to putting out any media statements about our plans, but felt it important to formally report to, and engage with, the Panel on our plans.
- 5.3 Northamptonshire has only one Deputy Chief Constable role, currently substantively filled by Mr Ivan Balhatchet. We have therefore asked Ivan to act up as Chief Constable to ensure the force has the leadership and stability it needs. During this period his official title will be Acting Chief Constable, in line with the wording of Section 41 of the PRSRA.
- 5.4 It remains unclear how long Mr Adderley will remain suspended, and therefore unable to exercise the functions of a Chief Constable, and Ivan will remain in the role of Acting Chief Constable until the process has reached its conclusion.
- 5.5 We understand that the other Chief Constables in the East Midlands region have reached out to Ivan to offer their ongoing support, for which we are very grateful. Support has also been forthcoming from the heads of both the National Police Chief's Council and the College for Policing.
- 5.6 Should there be any changes to these arrangements we will, of course, ensure the Panel are kept informed.

6. Recommendation(s)

- 6.1 That the Panel supports the temporary acting up arrangements outlined.
- 6.2 That the Panel notes the specific legislation position regarding temporary arrangements for Acting Chief Constables and its difference to other temporary senior appointments.

Stephen Mold
Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

This page is intentionally left blank



Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

30th November 2023

Office of the Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PLAN UPDATE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report updates the Panel on the work of the Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) and the progress being made in relation to the delivery of the Police, Fire and Crime Plan for Northamptonshire which is set out in more detail in appendix 2.

2. Delivering the Police, Fire and Crime Plan

2.1 “Prevention That Keeps the County Safe”

- 2.2 **Safer Streets** As part of Round Five of the Safer Streets Fund, the OPFCC has secured £646,570 to support practical and targeted projects to tackle burglary and vehicle crime and reduce violence against women and girls. This is the fifth time that we have made a successful Safer Streets bid since the scheme was launched four years ago. Rounds one and two were in relation to Neighbourhood Crime which was followed by the The Safety of Women at Night Fund (SWAN) which was focused on the protection of women and girls in the night-time economy. Rounds three to five were then expanded from just neighbourhood crime to include safety for women and girls. As a result of those bids, Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has been awarded nearly £4m to invest in crime prevention, and his office and partners have invested a further £1m to boost safety in communities across the county. The three successful Safer Streets projects in this round are:

- **Weston, Northampton and Kingswood, Corby:** A forensic property marking, and asset recording scheme called ‘Stand up to crime’ will be rolled out to residents to help tackle residential burglary. Equipment to identify stolen property will be installed in custody suites and given to second-hand dealers. Equipment to identify stolen property will be installed in custody suites and property suites. UV torches will be issued to all front-line officers, second-hand dealers aid remote routine searching of stolen goods.
- **Junction 15 A and Watford Gap M1 Services:** Several physical security measures such as improved fencing, lighting, CCTV and ANPR will be put in place to tackle theft from HGVs and other vehicles.
- **Violence against women and girls:** Staff at bus and train hubs in the county will be trained to recognise when women are vulnerable and how to respond appropriately. In addition

to this, working with West Northamptonshire Council, a scheme will see taxi marshals operating in the town centre during Friday and Saturday nights.

The OPFCC has already carried out Safer Streets projects across the county that have included the delivery of crime prevention improvements to homes and streets in residential areas of Northampton, Kettering and Wellingborough. CCTV has been upgraded and home security products distributed in Wellingborough, Kettering and Northampton, alleys have been gated in Wellingborough and Kettering and training schemes for staff and ID scanning technology has helped to make the night-time economy safer. All the proposals were developed based on crime rates in the areas to be targeted and following consultation with residents and other stakeholders. Work on all three projects, following recent grant allocations will begin as soon as possible. I am really pleased that yet again, we have been successful in bringing more money to Northamptonshire to support practical crime prevention projects to make communities safer. We will be working in partnership with other organisations and have listened to the concerns of local people in putting together a package of targeted measures to improve safety and tackle crime.

Since 2019, the OPFCC has worked closely with both North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils to successfully bid for Safer Streets money. More information on what we have been able to achieve is in appendix 1.

2.3 The Northamptonshire Police community messaging service, previously known as Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Alert, which provides a simple and convenient way for local people to receive news and updates about crime and policing in their area, was relaunched under a new name, Northamptonshire Talking. The service offers local residents and businesses the opportunity to get connected with what's happening in their local area, stay up to date about crime and policing issues, and get involved in shaping local policing priorities. One of the key features of Northamptonshire Talking is that it enables people to get directly in touch with their local officers. Each message sent has a reply option, which provides a simple way for people to contact their neighbourhood officer to give feedback, ask a question or share any information they may have about crime or anti-social behaviour. There's also the option to contact local officers directly by visiting the relevant team's Northamptonshire Talking web page. It provides local people with a direct line to their neighbourhood policing team, helping them to stay informed about what's happening in the area where they live or work. As well as local crime information, people can also sign up to receive messages from the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, as well as other trusted partners Neighbourhood Watch and Action Fraud. As part of our work to improve this vital service, the OPFCC have funded new additions to support the force with developing the system. The number of users has subsequently grown from 20,000 to 37,000 sign ups and in the coming months, Artificial Intelligence will make the system even more efficient, helping create message content more easily. There is also a new Rapport App on its way which will make sign ups even easier.

2.4 Northampton College has been supported by the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to create and deliver a bespoke training package for the students to help them recognise and call out harassment., Building on the nationally recognised 'Stand by Her' training, the package has been funded by my office as part of the Safer Streets Project. We have invested over £20,000 on the project, which has allowed up to 10 college tutors to create and deliver the course to over 1000 students across nine interactive sessions. The training aims to start conversations with men about negative attitudes and behaviours towards women and to empower participants to actively challenge derogatory and inappropriate

behaviour by their peers and colleagues. Reducing violence against women and girls is a key priority for me, and working in partnership with other organisations such as Northampton College is enabling projects like the 'Stand by Her' training to have the widest reach across the community. By working with Northampton College, we are reaching a key demographic of young people who can make a big difference in society and I'm very grateful for the way they have embraced this wholeheartedly. We are hoping that these sessions can create more allies and empower young men to challenge inappropriate behaviour against women and girls.

- 2.5 Work has been completed to gate off alleys around homes and the primary school on the Queensway estate in Wellingborough – to help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour as part of the programme of work funded by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Safer Streets project. A total of 43 gates have been placed on several alleys that are behind homes, at side entrances and off open spaces – chiefly around the Shelley Road area. Residents and businesses were consulted before installation of the gates, which will help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in places where alleys are used to give cover or as escape routes. Installation of the alley gates has been completed and ownership of these gates along with associated warranties is being transitioned to North Northamptonshire Council, who obtained the Public Spaces Protection Order to allow installation in partnership with my office. This is the latest phase of the scheme that has included fitting 594 new doors to 287 properties in Kiln and Minerva Way, fitting security lighting and rolling out security products to residents. This work has been completed in conjunction with social housing provider Greatwell Homes.

The final phase of the Queensway Safer Streets project was the installation of 15 new CCTV cameras, funded by the OPFCC as part of the project but installed and operated by North Northamptonshire Council. Almost £1 million has been spent on making the Queensway area more secure as part of the Safer Streets project. We have had great success in bidding for money to run projects in communities in Northamptonshire that have been affected by crime and these gates are one more practical measure to help keep people safer and focus on the local priorities that local people want us to tackle.

- 2.6 Combating violence against women and girls is another key area of our work. A pioneering training package for all taxi and private hire drivers in Northamptonshire that aims to help keep women safe on nights out has been shortlisted for an international award. The online tutorial is currently being rolled out in both North and West Northamptonshire Council areas – to help taxi and private hire drivers spot signs that women may be in danger. Drivers already play a big role in informally coming to the help of revellers who may find themselves vulnerable. The training aims to consolidate good practice and provide formal support. The project is part of a package of measures intended to improve the safety of women and girls, particularly in public spaces and at night. Taxi drivers are in a unique position to spot if someone is vulnerable or at risk, so we wanted to make sure that they understand the signs and know what to do. The training package will be disseminated to all new and existing drivers and comprises three short videos and a knowledge check for drivers to complete, primarily around women's safety. Over time, the intention is to factor this into both NNC and WNC licensing conditions with the aim that it will eventually be mandatory for drivers to complete and I am grateful for the support from both local authorities in delivering this longer term aspiration.
- 2.7 We have worked hard to make our roads safer for both motorists and pedestrians. A Northamptonshire scheme allowing community groups to apply for grant funding to improve road safety has been highlighted at a regional safety summit. The East Midlands and East of

England Road Safety Summit took place in Lincolnshire and gave Police and Crime Commissioners, road safety experts and local transport officers a forum to discuss strategies to make our roads safer. The event highlighted schemes from around the region that are being put in place to help cut the number of road accidents. The Road Safety Community Fund allows local community groups to apply for grants of up to £5,000 to improve road safety in their communities and supports initiatives that positively affect the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance's road safety priorities, including speed reduction, anti-social road use, distraction driving, and initiatives that improve road safety around school gates. This year, community groups and parish councils have already received more than £25,000. This has enabled them to buy Vehicular Activated Signs (VAS) and Speed Indicator Devices (SID), install traffic calming measures and has funded signage, parking buddies and lollipop provisions to improve road safety around some of our county's schools. The funds to support this scheme come exclusively from fines paid by speeding motorists in the county who attend speed awareness workshops.

The harm and loss of life on our roads is a real cause of concern. The number of incidents in our county each year is still far too high, and I know this is a concern to communities across the county. The Summit provided the opportunity to gain experience from others and bring ideas that have succeeded in other places that we can bring back to Northamptonshire to tackle road safety.

- 2.8 With West Northamptonshire Council we have recently run a grants process of up to £10,000 to voluntary and community sector organisations for projects working to tackle youth violence and knife crime in local communities. The new grants were available through a partnership between the Office of Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and West Northamptonshire Council. The grants were open to registered charities, voluntary or community groups, constitutionalised clubs that engage with young people, and not-for-profit organisations can submit an expression of interest form to West Northamptonshire Council outlining their project to be considered for Tackling youth violence and knife crime at the earliest stage is something that can only be achieved by all the agencies working together, and local community groups. Communities are often best placed to be effective and understand how best to prevent crime and support young people in their area. I am certain that investing in these groups will be a powerful tool in tackling violence. A list of where grants were awarded can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/news/over-ps94k-awarded-community-groups-mitigate-youth-violence-and-knife-crime-west-northants>

- 2.9 Thanks to Operation REPEAT, more offences have been reported and criminal activity prevented as people become more aware of scams, fraud and doorstep crime and can quickly and confidently intervene and notify the appropriate policing teams. The continuation of Operation REPEAT in Northamptonshire has been warmly welcomed from both private and public sector with support for the project coming from many established organisations such as AGE UK (Northants), Northants ACRE and Northamptonshire Carers. In Northamptonshire, we have reached almost 30,000 people through the scheme and almost 3500 people have been looked after. It is estimated that fraud is now believed to be responsible for 41% of all reported crime in UK. Fraud against the individual amounts to over £9.7billion with the figure rising to a staggering £193 billion taken across the country and equates to some £3900 per UK adult, with losses taking place at the rate of £6000 per second. This why schemes like Operation REPEAT are vital to help protect some of most vulnerable residents from the relentless attempts by fraudsters to steal money and blight lives. My office initially set up

Operation Repeat in the County. It has been so successful that I continue to fund this initiative and it is now supported by CADENT gas who have agreed to match fund this initiative over a two-year period.

- 2.10 Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue (NFRS) have delivered against their five prevention priorities which include road and water safety, early intervention and youth engagement. As part of their work, they have recruited a Complex Case Officer to work with partners in adult risk management and worked with Safeguarding Adults board to produce a hoarding framework for the county in response to increased referrals for hoarding. In addition to this, they have delivered Waterside Responder courses to target groups and establishments, provided winter warmth advice and resources to occupiers to help keep them safe and well during winter and further increase the involvement of operational staff in prevention activities to target risk in our communities. As well as increasing the number of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) delivered by Fire crews they now include advice about safe use and disposal of lithium-ion batteries given their increasing use in many modern devices and vehicles.
- 2.11 NFRS have worked with OPFCC teams to deliver a positive action course for women and girls that focuses on increasing personal resilience and developed more referral pathways for Firesetter Interventions with ACEs Turnaround and YOS teams. NFRS will also deliver further Early Intervention (EI) short programmes to meet the needs of priorities in particular Local Area Partnerships and continue to work with police and OPFCC to highlight victims of domestic abuse and both adult & CYP safeguarding concerns. NFRS have also delivered bespoke early interventions to target groups of young people including care leavers and those identified at risk by partners through programmes underpinned by the NFCC EI Framework, contributed to the new Serious Violence Duty through the SVD Partnership Agreement in place for Northamptonshire and supported the Northamptonshire County Schools Challenge on different seasonal topics. Looking ahead, NFRS will upskill their Youth Engagement Officers to ensure they have up to date information about exploitation and risks particular to young people. Modern Slavery training and awareness is also to be captured within the Safeguarding Training Needs Analysis at level 1 and 2, Specialist staff within Prevention & safeguarding have had separate input relevant to their roles.

2.12 “Effective and efficient response”

- 2.13 Increased arrests, a crackdown on traffic offences and a greater police presence are just some of the benefits resulting from the newly formed Roads Policing Team (RPT) who are driving down crime and improving road safety across Northamptonshire. Thanks to funding I was able to provide, the RPT consists of five teams each containing one sergeant and eight police constables who benefit from a state-of-the-art fleet of vehicles and drone and Automatic Number Plate Recognition capability. They work a 24-hour shift pattern all year round, providing comprehensive, vigilant cover for the county for the first time in over a decade. Roads policing has a critical role to play in reducing casualties, improving driver and rider behaviour as well as targeting and disrupting serious organised crime committed using the County’s road networks. A key part of the work carried out by the RPT will focus on the fatal five – not wearing a seatbelt, using a mobile device, being under the influence of drink or drugs, careless driving or excess speeds.

Casualties on our roads remains a problem and by addressing the dangers that exist, we aim to see a sustainable reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in collisions. Education, engagement and where necessary, enforcement will be used to make the roads a

safer place for all users. The work of the RPT is also crucial to the disruption of serious organised crime groups who use the road networks to commit criminal activity. The RPT will work to detect, disrupt and dismantle these groups.

When I ask people what they want from their local police, a visible presence that helps to create safer roads is always one of their top priorities. I am pleased to be able to support the creation of this dedicated new team of specialist police officers that will take responsibility for tackling driving and riding standards on the county's strategic road network. They will also make sure our roads are hostile places for criminals.

2.14 In 2022, NFRS commissioned an independent consultant to review operational resilience and wider organisational effectiveness. The overall objective is to review the current levels of demand of the Service, the current and emerging risks and our response to incidents and then to provide evidence to recommend potential changes to improve and futureproof the Service. Following the initial review work undertaken during 2022, the next phase will look to develop detailed recommendations. The outcome of this work will be presented during 2023/24 and will inform the future service needs, ensuring we have the right facilities, equipment and skills to respond to current and emerging risks. In addition to this, the publication of the comprehensive background risk analysis document has informed the service's Community Risk Management Plan 2022 – 2025 (CRMP) which will be reviewed annually. The CRMP processes will also be aligned to meet the national fire standards and will utilise the new census data and Local Area Partnership profiles to better understand risk.

2.15 A pioneering group set up to help Northamptonshire businesses protect themselves from cybercrime has won a national award. The Cyber Security Forum was set up by my office to allow cyber security leads from businesses around the county to meet, share best practice and learn from each other about digital threats and how to respond to them. Cyber fraud is never far from the headlines. National statistics show that 89 per cent of businesses have suffered a cyber-crime attack in the last 12 months, and 68 per cent of businesses have had a fraud event because of a phishing attack. The Northamptonshire Cyber Security Forum meets monthly, bringing together police and businesses and public sector organisations to discuss how to better protect systems and data from new and emerging threats, and tackle cybercrime in this county. Now the Forum has been recognised nationally, and shortlisted for The Real Cyber Awards 2023, in the Cyber Public Service category – recognising an individual or team in a public sector organisation delivering high-quality cyber security and education. The Real Cyber Awards is a national scheme that aims to “recognise people making a difference in the virtual world that has an impact in the real world”. The judges, made up from leaders in the technology and cyber sector, will make their decision at an event in November. It is fantastic news that the Forum run by my Office has been recognised as leading the way in supporting businesses with their cyber security. The impact of a cybercrime on a business can be absolutely devastating and I am glad that in Northamptonshire, we are providing a network to help professionals come together and share information.

2.16 “Protect & Support Those Who Are Vulnerable”

2.17 Voice for Victims and Witnesses, our victim and witness service, recently achieved the National Standing Together Victims Quality Mark. The lead assessor said: “Voice Northants provides an excellent service and a high standard of victim care. There is a strong and supportive culture among management and staff and clients are at the heart of all the organisation delivers. We found a high level of collaboration and a willingness to deliver a

comprehensive and inclusive support service to those who needed it. Partner organisations work well with Voice and hold the organisation in high regard. Our assessment shows a service dedicated to continuous improvement and a determination to support victims of crime to cope and recover.

This assessment was very welcome, and I would like to pay tribute to the work and dedication of all those who work for Voice. No one would ever want to be a victim of crime, but Voice is able to provide expert support and compassionate guidance to those who navigating their way through the criminal justice system.

Members will also be aware that Voice also transferred into the OPFCC on the 1st of April 23 from a Ltd Company owned by the OPFCC. The primary aim was to enable resilience and stability for staff and victims/witnesses in Northamptonshire. There have been no changes to delivery model or staffing except they are now directly employed by the OPFCC and I am sure they will continue to build upon the great work they have already achieved.

- 2.18 A community centre that uses music and recording equipment to help divert young people away from violence and knife crime has been awarded almost £10,000 in funding by my office. The Springs Family Centre, based in Spring Boroughs, Northampton, has been a hub of community spirit over the last 15 years, and has offered a 'safe haven' for young people to come and express themselves through sport, music and the arts. This has helped divert many of these young people away from criminal behaviour, and now with extra funding courtesy of the PFCC, they are set to expand their offering to young people in the neighbourhood. Already boasting a recording studio within the hub at Tower Street, the £9,900 funding I have provided will help them add DJ equipment to the studio, as well as offering training courses through the NCFE. It was fantastic to visit the Springs Family Centre and see first-hand the amazing work it is doing in helping young people in their local community. I was also proud to join the Springs Family Centre at a parliamentary briefing into knife crime and youth violence at the House of Commons on November 16th when the centre was able to discuss the positive influence it has had in diverting young people away from crime.
- 2.19 A specialist team set up to tackle the earliest signs of domestic abuse has helped more than 1,400 families in the first nine months of this year. Demand for their support is such that the number of domestic abuse specialists in the team has been increased from two to eight, to ensure they can continue to help all the families referred to them. Early Intervention is a key priority for me which is why I invested in a specialist team to focus on prevention and intervene early with young people to reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on their life chances. Two dedicated workers were then added to this team to focus on domestic abuse and family conflict, so support can now be offered to families from the very first time they come to police attention, and further incidents can be prevented. When a police officer attends a call to domestic abuse, details of the incident are given to a multi-agency team that reviews every incident, every day to ensure that the highest risk are tackled quickly. This approach deals effectively with the more complex cases, but previously, there was no ability to tackle incidents that appeared to be lower risk, to prevent them escalating. The two specialist Domestic Abuse Practitioners were added to the ACE Team in 2020 with the brief to engage with everyone who has been visited by police following a report of a domestic or family conflict incident that was lower risk.

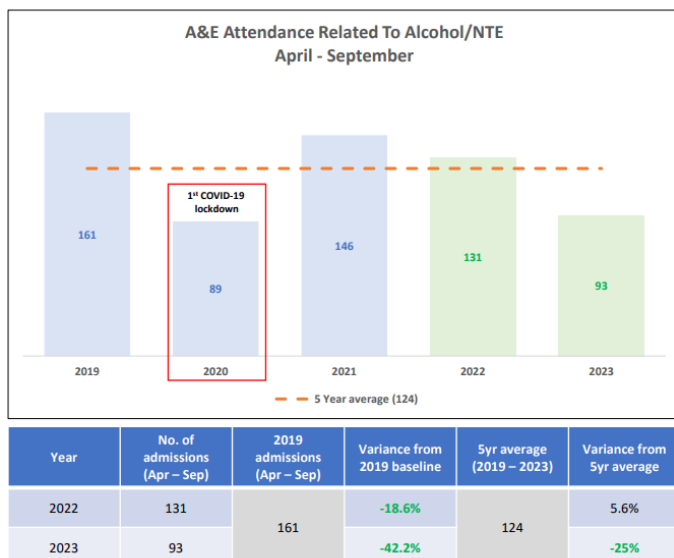
The Domestic Abuse Practitioners follow up each incident and contact every family that has received a police response to an incident. They try to understand what has sparked an incident, offering help and advice and signposting to other sources of support. Support can be

given to both the victim and the perpetrator, as well as any children who might have seen domestic abuse. Sometimes the Team find earlier incidents of abuse that had gone unreported and will ensure that the proper action is quickly taken to safeguard the family involved. Through this project and the work of our Domestic Abuse Practitioners, people are receiving help who would not have done so before. This specialist team steps in when there is still an opportunity to prevent abusive behaviour from escalating and at a time when someone might be more motivated to accept help. I want people in this county to be confident to report abuse and confident that if they do, someone is there to help them. Voice, the victims' service that sits within my office, provide incredible support to people who come forward for help having been victims of abuse and to better understand the criminal justice process. The ACE Team works at the other end of the spectrum and aim to stop further incidents before they occur. We will do all we can to help ensure that no-one must live with violent or abusive behaviour.

2.20 A second SNOvan is now providing a safe space in Kettering for anyone who finds themselves in need of support during an evening out. The SNOvan will be parked in Horsemarket on the last Friday of the month, and every Saturday between 10pm and 3am and provide a base for volunteers to supply a warm, safe welcome to someone who finds themselves vulnerable for any reason. The Kettering SNOvan, as in Northampton, will be an operating base for volunteer safety group the Northampton Guardians. The Guardians give their own time to give care that helps keep people safe and frees up emergency services to focus on the highest risk cases, and on tackling perpetrators of crime. The Northampton SNOvan has become a firm fixture in the town's night-time economy, and it will aim to give the same level of support to people in Kettering town centre. Since January 2023, the Guardians have given more than 1,900 hours of support on the SNOvan. When the first SNOvan was launched in December 2021, the Northampton Guardians have helped at least 1,200 people in a variety of ways, ranging from supplying water or warmth, first aid, or helping them get home safely. We want to reduce the risk of someone coming to harm and help to create a calm and comfortable atmosphere for everyone enjoying a night out. The partnership of the SNOvan and the Guardians has boosted safety in Northampton. I hope it will have the same impact on the night-time economy in Kettering. The success of the SNOvan is reflected in the fact that attendances to A&E during April – September 2023 are down by over 40% in comparison to the 2019 baseline which means we are helping those enjoying our night-time economy are able to seek help and assistance much earlier and the Guardians are able to provide a friendly and supporting refuge for those who require it.

Alcohol Related A&E Attendance During SNO Van Operational Hours

Total no. of alcohol related A&E admissions (Apr – Sep)



Headlines:

- There were **93** A&E attendances during April – September 2023. This is a **42.2%** reduction in comparison to the 2019 baseline and **25%** below the 5-year average.
- There were only **4** additional A&E attendances in April – September 2023 than there were in 2020, which was the first COVID-19 lockdown period.
- Strong reductions also evident during April – September 2022 against the 2019 baseline (**-18.6%**) and there were only **7** additional admissions in comparison to the 5-year average.
- There were 12 A&E related attendances in June 2023. This is a **69%** reduction in comparison to June 2019 (39). June 2022 saw a reduction of **41%** (23).

- 2.21 The Early Intervention and Youth Service continues to grow to meet the demands of the county with nine new Practitioners having joined the team. The tier 2 support work is a county wide offer, working alongside partners to get the right support at the right time to children, young people and families and prevent further incidents of distress and reduce the likelihood of entering the criminal justice system.
- 2.22 **Family Support** - The team support children, young people and their families across Northamptonshire. There are seven Early Intervention Family Support Officers who each hold a case load of approximately ten cases for a period of around twelve weeks. Organisations referring to the team include Northamptonshire Childrens Trust (NCT) schools, nursery settings, midwives, health visitors, school nurses and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), where referrals are assessed as not meeting Tier 4 or Tier 3 thresholds.

The issues being referred for support include:

- Children and Young People displaying challenging behaviours in the family home and in school.
- Parenting issues and request for support with managing challenging behaviours.
- Support for emotional, mental health and wellbeing for children, young people and their parents.
- Overcoming barriers preventing school attendance.
- Support for parents to manage their finances.
- Practical support, advice and guidance re: housing, household bills, form completion, school and nursery places, counselling and signposting to other services.
- Advocacy

Most referrals to the team request support for multiple issues.

From May to 25th August 2023, the team accepted ninety-nine referrals. Referrals were received from across the county, with the majority being from the Northampton area.

Geographical Area	Number of Referrals Accepted
Northampton	32
Daventry District	10
South Northants	8
Wellingborough	14
East Northants	7
Kettering	14
Corby	14

The work we receive is very encouraging and underlines the value and importance of this work. For example, some of the feedback we received from parents included the following:

- “Lauren was an absolute pleasure to work with and me and all my children will miss seeing her... all the best for the future Lauren.” (May 2023)
- “I am happy and mentally relaxed, and I feel that I am not alone. I feel that I am lucky. I feel Anna is perfect.” (June 2023)

- “I honestly can't thank Em enough for how she has shaped my future. I feel like for the first time in years I could actually be honest and open about both myself and how I am with the children. She is non-judgemental and every time she could see and understand what I needed to say and hear (even if blunt- I needed it and embraced it!)” (July 2023)

We have also received valuable feedback from our partner agencies which included:

- “So excellent to have support in the home for this family, child presenting differently in school and masking behaviours so to be able to get support was brilliant for putting in appropriate long-term services.” – Ecton Brook Primary School (May 2023)
- “Thank-you very much. It's often we have people fall through the net so to speak as they do not meet criteria with other services.” – WNC Housing Options (June 2023)
- “This is an excellent service for supporting young people and families.” Montsaye Academy (July 2023)

2.23 **EI and ACE Officers - Parenting Workshops** - The online-workshop catalogue has grown and developed, and we are now offering workshops to parents and carers on a range of topics including:

- Positive Parenting
- Understanding the Teenage Brain
- Self-Care and the Impact on Parenting
- Managing Challenging behaviours
- Maintaining Rules and Boundaries

The workshop catalogue has been shared with all schools so they can promote and refer parents and carers onto these. In this reporting period the team have delivered twenty-four workshops to sixty-two parents and carers.

Where feedback was completed, attendees agreed that their knowledge and understanding had improved by an average of 49% after attending the workshop. Some of the feedback we received included:

“Both the presenters were friendly, professional and knowledgeable. I really enjoyed the course.” (Attendee from Positive Parenting. – July 2023)

“The way the workshop was delivered has made it easy for me to digest, by being able to talk about real life scenarios and situations has helped me to understand it and for it to sink in. the way you talked about it helped it to make sense.” (Attendee from Positive Parenting. – July 2023)

2.24 **Adverse Childhood Experiences Training and Overview of the Service Offer** - All schools across the county have been offered free training to help identify children who are affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences and an overview of the Early Intervention Service and how to make a referral. This training has also been offered and delivered to some nursery settings, health professionals and other partnership forums to help promote the service and enhance understanding of ACE's and the impact of Childhood Trauma. The feedback we have received from the training has been overwhelmingly positive which will undoubtedly translate into more successful referrals in the future leading to better outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children and young people.

- 2.25 **Domestic abuse and family conflict project** - Within the Early Intervention and Youth Service we have highly experienced domestic abuse practitioners. The team follow up incidents of domestic abuse and family conflict where a Public Protection Notification (PPN) has been completed by a Police Officer who has been called to a domestic abuse incident and children are present. This incident is police graded as 'no action required' and therefore no support was offered. The team now contact the victim and offer advice, guidance and family support to reduce the chances of a further incident and Police call out.

Between Jan 2023 to October 2023 – the team have received 1379 referrals (PPNs)

The top four issues reported during this period:

- Physical Abuse
- Harassment
- Relationship Breakdown
- Emotional Abuse

In July 2023, the team started offering the same support to couples who have no children but have had a police call out for domestic abuse. This project was reviewed at the end of September to look at engagement, and outcomes.

Between July 2023 and October 2023 118 cases were put forward by the Force for follow up. A number of these were uncontactable due to incorrect contact numbers or getting no response from contact attempts. In response to this, Practitioners now contact the Officer in Charge of the incident, resulting in alternative contact numbers being provided which is increasing the numbers we are now able to support.

Of those supported, the most common presenting issues were:

- Communication Issues
- Physical abuse
- Harassment
- Relationship breakdown

Northampton continues to be where most issues are reported followed by Kettering/Corby, Wellingborough/East Northants the Daventry/South Northants.

Three of the domestic abuse practitioners are training to become Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVAs) as part of their continued professional development. With another three practitioners starting the training in February 2024. This is a nationally recognised qualification in the field of domestic abuse and demonstrates our commitment to offer the highest quality of support to the families in Northamptonshire. The team are also supporting VOICE Victim and Witness Service to help manage workload for the next two months.

- 2.26 **Domestic Abuse Parental Workshops** - The Domestic Abuse project team has delivered eighteen virtual workshops to parents covering the Impact of Parental Conflict on children and young people and workshops exploring healthy and unhealthy relationships and the impacts on children and young people. Our workshop offer is looking to expand to include the conflict of co-parenting in the coming months. 89 Parents attended the workshops, all reporting a greater understanding of the issues evidenced by pre and post feedback scores. On average their understanding increased by 44%.

2.27 **Supporting the CIRV Programme** - Five Early Intervention and Youth Workers support the Forces Youth Violence Intervention Unit (YVIU) - Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) programme. They seek to engage young people onto CIRV Pathway and will complete interventions to increase knowledge around exploitation and vulnerability. Since April 2023 the team engaged with 172 young people which led to 45% of young people accepting support either with the CIRV Programme, the Youth Offending Service, Local Authority or OPFCC Tier 2 Services. As of September, the YVIU was launched with significant changes that now see the Early Intervention Practitioner manage cases and offer appropriate learning interventions.

Some of the work undertaken included:

- How their ACEs have impacted their lives.
- Understanding Criminal Exploitation.
- The impact of carrying knives, information on the law and risks.
- Understanding risky behaviours. What this is and how does affect the young person, their families and wider community.
- Understanding emotions and looking at strategies to manage these in a safer way.
- Supporting parents to understand the risks of Criminal Exploitation and supporting with putting boundaries in place to help reduce risk.
- Referrals to CIRV Mentors for intensive support if required.

The team supporting CIRV have visited schools across the county to deliver information on knife crime and exploitation alongside the local Neighbourhood Policing team. This information has been given to 2060 children. This project will continue following the murder of a 16-year-old in Northampton in March. The team also supports the Police “weeks of action” This multi skilled approach has helped to engage young people to discuss their concerns in their communities about knife crime and the opportunity to offer reassurance and share knowledge.

2.28 **Missing Person Project** - An innovative approach to supporting young people who are at risk of going missing was launched in Northamptonshire on November 1. The scheme builds on a pilot phase that ran for three months earlier this year, when a specialist Youth Worker from the OPFCC Early Intervention Team visited every young person who had been missing three times or less, soon after their return. Fifty-two young people in Northamptonshire went missing during the pilot phase, and Youth Workers visited each of them as soon as possible after their return – following up in more detail the statutory visit that all young people who have been missing receive from their local authority. OPFCC early intervention workers now support the Missing Person's Unit (MPU) visiting young people who have three or less missing episodes. The aim is to identify needs of support early to reduce further missing episodes, reduce risk of exploitation and demand on Police resources. In addition, the role also plays a key part in building trust with parents to empower them to share and report concerns for their child. A dedicated worker was allocated to the Missing Persons Unit on the 30th of October 2023

Presenting Issues	Number of YP with Presenting Issues
Mental Health	19
Parenting	25
CSE	7
Substance Misuse	11
CE	14
DA	3
NEET	2

Number of Visits	Area
12	Wellingborough
3	South Northants
10	East Northants
3	Corby
14	Kettering
31	Northampton
73	TOTAL

- **31%** of Young People visited to date accepted additional support where previously no support had been put in place.
- **77%** of Young People visited to date were left with ongoing support, either with the Local Authority or through referrals completed by EI and ACE Officers / Youth Workers to; OPFCC EI Service, Youth Offending Service (PADs), CIRV and most recently allocated to Youth Worker for MPU.
- **96%** of young people visited to date have not been reported missing again.

2.29 **Youth work support** - Youth Workers supported 111 young people with issues around risk taking behaviours which were impacting their chances of staying within mainstream education and increasing risk of exploitation. The Youth workers delivered sixty-three groupwork sessions to 147 young people in targeted schools across the county covering:

- Healthy relationships
- Anti-social behaviour
- Child Exploitation
- Grooming and gangs
- One punch, violence & anger
- Sexual health
- Bullying/ friendships
- Emotional wellbeing

The Youth Workers have delivered five Healthy Relationship school drop-ins seeing 138 students to give advice and guidance around unhealthy relationships including sexual health support. They also completed a school year group intervention day covering knife crime, alcohol, drugs and keeping safe to 169 students.

The team continue to build vital relationships with schools to ensure we can support students to get the right help in place. Their role often involves advocating for young people in a variety

of situations such as getting reasonable adjustments in place within education settings, supporting family relationships to aid discussions to prevent family breakdown, signposting to services to accessing emergency contraception and helping young people to self-refer for counselling services.

2.30 “Effective Justice”

2.31 The ongoing impact on the COVID pandemic on the criminal justice system remains a key priority for me as PFCC. As the chair of the Local Criminal Board (LCJB), I continue to use my influence to make sure that all agencies respond to these emerging issues and remain focused on delivering effective and timely justice for victims. Currently, timeliness for charging decisions by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) continue to be a concern for me, however it worth acknowledging that this is a regional issue and not just isolated to Northamptonshire. Through my chairmanship of the LCJB, we have been working closely with both the Force and local CJS partners to devise a set of Key Performance Indicators which will be presented to the LCJB on a regular basis. Through this work, a whole-system-approach has been created, with twenty-four measures providing a rounded view of performance which monitors inputs such as timeliness, processes, outcomes and quality across the CJS. I am certain that the dashboard will be a valuable tool in assessing the overall performance of the local CJS and will help me to hold relevant parties to account. The dashboard is also being seen as an example of best practice across the region which has generated a great deal of interest with regional colleagues who are now looking to take a similar approach to this ongoing issue.”

2.32 “Modern Services That Are Fit for Purpose”

2.33 Since its inception, the Customer Service Team has dealt with a total of 8040 contacts from members of the public that includes complaints, queries, and requests for complaint reviews. Whilst demand continues to increase, the team continues to maintain high levels of service recovery with an average of 69 per cent of complaints being resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. This is not only more efficient, but also reduces the workload on the Force’s Professional Standards Department, freeing up their resources to deal with the most serious complaints.

As panel members will know, complaints are closely monitored to identify any themes, patterns or trends to inform service development and improve performance. Recent data from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) reflects the Customer Service Team are outperforming the vast majority of other Customer Service Teams nationally, for example, we contact complainants within an average of one working day compared to a national average of five working days. We also resolve complaints in an average of seven working days, which is significantly quicker than the national average of 13 working days.

In addition to their work with complaints against the Force, the OPFCC’s Customer Service Team have taken on the management of the Fire and Rescue Service’s complaints process to free up capacity within NFRS to deal with operational demands and enable more effective oversight. Since taking over this responsibility in April 2023, the Customer Service Team has received 11 complaints and, as with Police complaints, they are able to provide me with an oversight of any trends or issues so that I can raise them directly with the Chief Fire Officer.

2.34 A thorough review of the Fire estate has been undertaken and recommendations have been made that will ensure our facilities are sustainable, more environmentally friendly and have a

lesser reliance on fossil fuels. Our fleet has also been reviewed and we have already installed telematics into our vehicles to help understand how they are used and to inform our future fleet needs and vehicle replacement programme. Recommendations are already being rolled out, such as the development of new training materials, a new risk profile for large open rural areas that could be affected by wildfires and new equipment to assist with fighting such fires. The recent introduction of wildfire backpacks on every frontline appliance has already proven a valuable investment. The roll out of other recommendations will be completed by the end of 2023 and evaluated during 2024. In the longer term, this and future reviews will inform our fleet and equipment capital programme.

- 2.35 Earlier this year, I was pleased to welcome Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) from across the East Midlands Region to attend an Advanced Training Day. ICVs from Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire came together to hear from experts in the criminal justice arena and talk to other ICV colleagues from across the region, to share experiences and best practice and to be recognised for the valuable voluntary work they do. The Regional Advanced Training Day for ICVs takes place bi-annually and this year it was Northamptonshire's turn to host the event. Many ICVs were new to the scheme after a considerable recruitment effort over the last six months, so this year's event was the first for many of the delegates. I really value the work that our ICVs do in Northamptonshire to ensure our custody suites are running as they should. I know ICVs are equally important to other Police and Crime Commissioners across the East Midlands region. ICVs fulfil a role required by law, on our behalf, to ensure that the Police Force is treating their detainees with dignity and in line with their rights and entitlements. We appreciate that ICVs are volunteers who give whatever time they can to help us to make a difference, so it was great to welcome delegates from the five different areas and thank them for their efforts and dedication. Over the last twelve months, ICVs in the East Midlands Region have conducted 520 custody visits, which have included visits during the day and at the most anti-social of hours. ICVs have spoken to 1,457 detainees in that time and observed many more. Collectively ICVs have given over 1,000 hours of their time to visits, in addition to attending regular meetings and undertaking training, as well as providing direct inputs into training courses for custody staff.
- 2.36 The serving with pride staff survey aimed to find out what members of the Fire and Rescue Service thought were positives of working for the services, and what improvements could and should be made. The starting point was an IPSOS survey, which took place at the beginning of the year and involved all three organisations. This highlighted the themes like visibility, integrity and culture and importantly, indicated that staff who work for NFRS didn't feel as positive about their organisation as staff who work for Northamptonshire Police do about theirs. The Serving with Pride consultation also took a closer look at how staff feel, and what can be done to ensure everyone who works for NFRS is and feels valued. Recommendations to address the key areas will be published by mid-December and will include setting out clear actions, who will be taking them forward and timescales for delivery. I will bring a full update and report on the consultation to a future meeting of the panel.

3. Holding the Chiefs to account

3.1 Fire Accountability Board - 11 April 2023

Strategic Outcomes Requirements Letter – I welcomed the update and sought clarification regarding the progress being made by the Fire and Rescue Service from the Chief Fire Officer on the compliance regarding the HMICFRS recommendation relating to People and Culture. In response to the Chief Fire Officer, I have requested a further update on the work being

delivered in this area. In relation to the work being undertaken on the Code of Ethics, I have suggested that the Fire and Rescue Service examine the work being delivered in Berkshire and requested further assurance on how the delivery of the Code of Ethics and how this work will sit alongside the internal values of the service. I have also sought further assurance in relation to the work being undertaken to Diversity in the Service and Workplace Development. Overall, I was assured that the service was addressing the strategic challenges facing the service in a positive manner but requested updates to ensure the direction of this work remained positive and focussed.

Performance update -I was pleased with the performance update that was provided by the Fire and Rescue Service and did question how resources could be better used with the reported fall in demand. In relation to false alarms, I questioned what work was being undertaken to better understand the reasons behind the numbers and requested further information on it. I was also assured that performance regarding appliance availability was positive but wanted a further update on this at the next Accountability Board meeting.

Manchester Arena Inquiry - I welcomed the joint update and sought assurance in relation to the gap analysis work that relevant individuals have been identified to ensure all work streams are owned and accountable. I suggested that a full exercise be undertaken in the county and was prepared to provide funding to stress test the structures that have been put in place, relating to a marauding terrorist attack. I have also placed on record the fact that I was pleased with the work that had been delivered and questioned how this could be built upon to deliver additional benefits. I was assured that both organisations were working well on this and that the services have responded to the report in a through and professional manner.

3.2 Fire Accountability Board - 9 May 2023

Appliance Cover Levels - On receiving this report I noted that it contained a lot of useful and interesting background and context and while some of the data in the report explaining historic rationale for decision making was six years out of date. I did accept that this would be updated in the upcoming ECR. I was also accepting of the fact that a more appropriate manner of describing the basis for determining appliance cover levels would be “adequate for the most frequently encountered events” rather than using the phrase “safe cover levels”. However, I was not satisfied that the submitted report answered the questions that I had posed in relation to the Chief Fire Officers views on appropriate cover levels and requested that ACFO Hallam raise this on his return from leave.

Fire Efficiency and Productivity Plans - The presentation I was provided with contained background to the efficiency and productivity plans for NFRS. I welcomed and was assured about the increases being shown in home fire safety checks and how this contributed to making people safer in a proactive way. The challenge that the I raised was that while all the things mentioned in the presentation were positive the Chief Officers needed to be able to convert how this activity was creating efficiencies or productivity gains as a part of the national requirements. I noted that I looked forward to seeing further results from this in the future.

3.3 Fire Accountability Board - 13 June 2023

HMICFRS report on Fire culture and values - I welcomed the fact that the Chief Fire Officer accepted all the 35 recommendations in the HMICFRS report and I was pleased that the basic transactional things needed to be delivered as a part of those recommendations were completed or on the way to completion but I did stress that there was more to do to get to

the point where all involved could be satisfied and assured that the service reflected the culture that was expected. I discussed with the Chief Fire Officer the CFO assessment that the service needed a wider overarching plan including EDI as well as its primary and legal missions and challenged when that would be the case. While recognising the progress so far in terms of transactional activity, I was clear that I was not assured that we were where we needed to be in terms of culture and leadership and expected to see more progress. I will continue to receive updates until I am satisfied that is the case.

DBS process - I thanked all for the work delivered on this subject and for all recognising the importance of it. I was in agreements over the types and frequency of checks that should be undertaken of employees in Fire and Rescue service in Northamptonshire, and that the position agreed properly reflected the role of what these staff do and undertake.

3.4 **Fire Accountability Board – 11 July 2023**

Strategic Outcomes Letter Requirements - I expressed my dissatisfaction with the content and quality of the paper submitted to the accountability board on this subject and stated that I expected additional details to be included in future iterations. The contents of the report were used as a basis for discussion at the meeting, but it was lacking in a number of areas.

Performance Update – I welcomed the update and noted the increases in demand in some areas of the business but also noted than in many cases, this was because of the summer 2022 spate conditions and therefore it was too early to determine any longer-term trend in demand for the service. I welcomed the fact that casualties were low, and the work achieved by protection and prevention teams was making the county safer and I was also pleased with the discussions regarding the potential bringing together of the BI and data staff for Fire and Police and the progression to get better live time data for NFRS.

3.5 **Fire Accountability Board – 8th August 2023**

Health and Safety report - The Chief Fire Officer stated that future iterations of this would have a deeper dive and analysis into the “what is” that were raised as a result of its content. I was pleased and assured about how the NFRS Health and Safety Board were looking into the causal factors relating to Health and Safety incidents, and that the report showed no overall concerning issues and a downward trend in incidents especially more serious ones where there was a requirement to notify HSE. I did raise some questions from the report about references to decontamination procedures for Firefighters and asbestos procedures. The Chief Fire Officer and his team explained that decontamination procedures were being looked at and in an old estate it was not possible to implement perfect solutions that could be built into newer premises but workarounds that were safe were being explored and that the comments about asbestos procedures had been resolved with some training and the appointment of a new contractor; both of which provided additional assurances. I asked the Chief Fire Officer if he was satisfied with Health and Safety arrangements in place in Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and that they were sufficient. He stated that being in post only for a small number of weeks he was not able to answer that but would be providing assurances over the coming weeks. I was generally assured with the contents of the report and asked that this matter be brought back in 6 months for the CFO to provide the requested assurances about sufficiency of Health and Safety processes.

Budget Outturn report 2022/2023 - I thanked those involved in the production of this report and more importantly for involvement in the management of the NFRS devolved budget for

2022/2023 and stated that we were still seeing improvement year on year with how this was managed with less volatility in year but there were areas where the Service needs to improve. I noted that there had been some significant spends of overtime last year but was provided with assurances that this was now much more robustly managed. I asked for some further assurances relating to the continued use of sessional workers to deliver Fire Safety Checks, as the business case to employ full time staff was predicated on the fact that these would cease. I was also provided with assurances that the NFRS capital programme was being refined regularly and was improving in terms of delivery. It was important to be ambitious, but this needed to be balanced with deliverability. I then formally accepted this paper as the outturn budget report for NFRS for 2022/2023.

HMICFRS update - I was provided with an update on the fourteen identified areas for improvement and the cause of concern from the 2021 HMICFRS inspection of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service. I was then given assurances that they will be in the position to provide evidence that most of the fourteen areas for improvement will have been completed by the time of the next inspection. The Chief Fire Officer made the point that the cultural issues will take longer to evidence the effect of them, although the tangible interventions to change them might have been put in place. There was discussion about the fact that the report made it clear that there was significant work being undertaken but there was a difference between informing people what was taking place and seeing positive change as a result. He was seeking that assurance. I remained concerned about the discharge of the cause of concern and reiterated to the Chief Fire Officer that this work was key and critical.

3.6 **Fire Accountability Board – 11th September 2023**

Internal Audit Report - I welcomed the update and set out his expectations that NFRS sets high standards that underpin the delivery of an efficient service. I also emphasised the need for the service to have a suite of options when encountering any issues or challenges that may arise. Although I was assured that progress and improvements are being made, I did raise my concerns in relation to safeguarding and compliance and requested further updates on these to ensure I was fully assured that the service was managing these issues effectively. I also reminded colleagues that Enabling Services was not a separate organisation, and it was essential that effective data sharing procedures were in place to support the delivery of front-line services.

Fire Standards Update – I noted the challenge in meeting over six hundred actions in relation to fire standards and reiterated my stance that the service needs to ensure that meeting the standards is a key aspect of the day-to-day work so that it helps to underpin the delivery of an efficient and effective fire and rescue service. I was assured that progress was being made but suggested that any timescales associated with his work were realistic and achievable.

Medium Term Financial Plan - I welcomed the update and acknowledged the ongoing financial challenges facing the public sector. I was assured that the MTFP was robust and provided a realistic set of potential outcomes based on informed professional opinion. I was also assured that the MTFP was within previously assumed budgetary boundaries and that potential pressures were identified and the need for savings as appropriate as it was important the service was prepared to meet future challenges.

3.7 **Police Accountability Board - 11 April 2023**

Manchester Arena report - I welcomed the joint update and sought assurance in relation to the gap analysis work that relevant individuals have been identified to ensure all work streams are owned and accountable. I then suggested that a full exercise be undertaken in the county and was prepared to provide funding to stress test the structures that have been put in place, relating to a marauding terrorist attack. I also placed on record the fact that I was pleased with the work that had been delivered and questioned how this could be built upon to deliver additional benefits. I was assured that both organisations were working well on this and that the services have responded to the report in a thorough and professional manner.

Strategic Outcomes Requirements Letter - I was pleased with the update and the level of detail the force was able to provide and that this work will become part of the ongoing accountability process. I sought further clarification on the figures relating to repeat victimisation and that in relation to Domestic Abuse and VAWG, I wanted reassurance that the investment is being used to improve frontline operational policing. I also requested further information and assurance in relation to the difference in the DA outcome figures between the North and West areas of the County. I then sought assurance on the figures relating to out of court disposals as I felt this was an issue that needed to be raised at the LCJB. Overall, I was assured that good work and improvements are being delivered and he would like the force to be able to maintain and increase this momentum to delivery more improvements.

Force Matters of Priority update for 2023/2024 - I welcomed the update and noted that the Force were still undertaking work in relation to the matter of priority for 2023-34. I noted that there should be an agreed baseline to enable accurate monitoring and performance management and I sought some assurance that progress and success can be easily identified and communicated. Overall, I was assured with the direction of travel and would discuss the priorities with colleagues in the OPFCC and provide feedback to the Force.

3.8 **Police Accountability Board - 9 May 2023**

Integrated Offender Management – I was pleased to receive this update and was confident that IOM was developing under the revised management and governance structures put into place by the Chief Constable. I was assured to see that the scheme was developing to include some IOM activity in relation to a cohort of lower risk registered sex offenders, aimed at robust management and behavioural change. I was similarly assured with the ongoing work relating to Domestic Abuse and MAPPA offenders. The IOM work is showing early indications that offending behaviour of IOM cohort members reduces both during and after engagement with the scheme. I welcomed the report, was assured that positive progress had and was being made and looked forward to the full evaluation once completed.

3.9 **Police Accountability Board - 13 June 2023**

HMICFRS value for money profiles - I welcomed the presentation and there were discussions relating to the detail as contained within the VFM profiles. There were some areas where the Force was to be considered as an outlier, but I was assured that where this is the case the reason for it is understood. I commended the work completed by the Force's Performance and Demand team, to get the Force to the position where the data provided through this process was well understood and was used to inform future decisions relating to resourcing within the Force. I described the data as very insightful and was assured about both the understanding and the use that the Force made of it.

Firearms and Explosives Licensing Unit – I made it clear that I was unhappy that I had been provided assurances by the Chief Constable through this process on two previous occasions and neither had been delivered. I was frustrated that there appeared to have been little understanding or grip on the processes within this team. As a result, I required a further update at the next meeting from the Chief Constable. I sought and was provided with assurance that there was now better understanding, with processes being put in place to resolve these matters and I welcomed the fact that risk profiling was considered more important but made the point that this needed to be done, without any compromise to it, alongside the provision of a good level of customer service more generally. I requested a verbal update at the July meeting on the progress of the implementation of recommendations and actions from the peer reviews and other findings.

Internal audit on reasonable adjustments - Having received this update relating to the responses put into place following this audit I was assured that the proper and appropriate governance had been put into place to resolve these identified issues.

Internal audit - This update was submitted as part of the annual assurance check of the previous year's internal audit process and inspections. I was assured that proper governance arrangements were in place to receive, assess and action any internal audit recommendation. I thanked the Chief Constable and ACO Paul Bullen, for the work undertaken on these processes alongside the previous Deputy Chief Constable.

3.10 Police Accountability Board - 11 July 2023

Strategic outcomes requirements letter update - I welcomed the first of these updates and acknowledged that it was early in the year and as such was generally satisfied with progress against the outcomes identified within the letter. There was more to do to deliver all the required and agreed outcomes, but I was pleased that the Force were adopting dynamic approaches to solving problems and were changing these if they did not reap the benefits and successes that had been anticipated.

Force matters of priority update - I welcomed the fact that in many instances the Force performance was positive in comparison with the baseline figures set in the Home Office Digital Poling and Crime Measures and in comparison, with peers. I was clear however that I was less satisfied with the data that showed neighbourhood crimes were increasing and, that positive outcomes were still below where he would expect them to be. More work was required to deliver better results for local people, and he requested a further update relating to these offences in September. I reinforced my view made at a previous accountability board that serious violence was an area also that required additional focus and work this year and welcomed the fact that there was renewed focus on this and strengthened resources being brought to bear in relation to it.

Rape and serious sexual offences update - I was pleased that on an initial assessment of the new national guidance the Force felt it was in a strong position because of the early work it had implemented. I was further assured moves to align the SOLAR teams more closely with child protection and domestic abuse units. I then acknowledged the positive work that had taken place and already demonstrating improvements in these hugely important investigations.

3.11 Police Accountability Board – 8th August 2023

Budget Outturn 2022/2023 - I commented favourably in relation to the budget monitoring and management processes in place within Northamptonshire Police and was assured that they were robust, meaning that the Chief Constable and I were able to have confidence in this. During the presentation of the paper there were discussions about Police Community Support Officer vacancies and staff vacancies in Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) and Firearms Licensing Unit (FELU). The Chief Constable provided some assurances that observations about PCSO numbers and role played in neighbourhood policing would be answered in the paper that the PFCC is to receive relating to the future vision of neighbourhood policing by the end of August. I was assured that all available efforts were being made to fill vacancies in the DFU and FELU, and there were additional details relating to this in the paper relating to FELU later in the meeting. I formally agreed and accepted the report as the final Northamptonshire Police budget outturn report for 2022/2023.

Investment proposal update – I received an update on the implementation of the investment proposals that had been agreed with the Chief Constable as part of the budget setting process for 2023/2024. All investments were examined, and I was overall assured with collective progress. I did express some concerns over the length of time taken to procure and implement a rapid video response facility as described in the initial proposals but was pleased to hear that this was nearing completion and that an operational system should be in place ahead of Christmas 2023. I was also pleased and assured that the investments made in additionality for occupational health and clinical supervision were proving to be highly effective, well used and well received with staff.

Firearms Licensing – I did note the positive progress that had been made in recent months to remove the backlog, relating to renewals and was assured that this was moving in the right direction. I was also assured with balance that the Force was taking to manage risk rather than customer expectations, as borne out in external peer reviews was the right approach and should not be compromised, but I did reiterate points made previously that there still needed to be a good quality of service. There was discussion about the feasibility of alternative charging models for grants and renewals and the OPFCC Director for Delivery confirmed he had written to the Home Office in relation to this and was awaiting a response. I then raised some concerns that the focus on renewals, while being right did not lead to a backlog in grants of applications. This was noted by the Chief Constable and assurances were provided that additional staff recruitment was in progress, and this could be managed. I then indicated that I was likely to seek further assurances on this subject in the coming months.

3.12 Police Accountability Board - 11 September 2023

Complaints and Reflective Practice Update - I welcomed and acknowledged the fact that since I last received a report on this matter the timeliness of complaint handling within the Force had seen some improvements. However, I did reiterate that I still saw this as an area where improvements could and should be sought, as this was a key part of the legitimacy of policing. I was particularly interested to see in the future how the use of techniques such as practice requiring improvement could be used more widely to improve customer contact and improve confidence and service delivery. The Chief Constable stated that he saw this whole area as an area that will require investment in the future and had requested an update from the Head of PSD as to what a future structure might look like.

Neighbourhood crime update - I acknowledged that looking at the Home Office 2019 baseline figures for Neighbourhood Crime, the Force is not an outlier, and its performance was strong against peers. I did recognise that the improvements have been made, especially relating to offences of robbery but expressed my desire to see a more joined up approach relating to vehicle crime specifically and questioned as to why there was not a cohesive Neighbourhood Crime prevention of reduction strategy and approach. I requested a further update when the Force had considered this point.

Medium term financial plan update – I thanked those that had been involved in the development of this revised MTFP and stated that I had high levels of confidence in the assumptions made and the projections demonstrated in the paper as a result. It was pleasing that we had a sound understanding of any potential challenges that lay ahead and I was assured that the update was thorough and well presented.

4. Summary of PFCC Decisions taken

- [Decision Record 346 - Voice for Victims and Witnesses novate contract with Assist Trauma Care](#)
- [Decision Record 347 - Fleet Purchases with Cupra-VW](#)
- [Decision Record 348 - Fleet Purchases with Ford](#)
- [Decision Record 349 - Fleet Purchases with Kia](#)
- [Decision Record 350 - Fleet Purchases with Peugeot](#)
- [Decision Record 351 - Fleet Purchases with Seat-VW](#)
- [Decision Record 352 - Fleet Purchases with Skoda-VW](#)
- [Decision Record 353 - Fleet Purchases with Toyota](#)
- [Decision Record 354 -Fleet Purchases with Vauxhall](#)
- [Decision Record 355 - Fleet Purchases with Volvo](#)
- [Decision Record 356 - Fleet Purchases with Yamaha](#)
- [Decision Record 357 - Taser Contract with Axon Public Safety UK](#)
- [Decision Record 358 -Adobe Licenses to Police Digital Services](#)
- [Decision Record 359 - Police National Legal Database](#)
- [Decision Record 360- Travel Management with Travel Perk](#)
- [Decision Record 361 - Novation for Provision of ISVAs and CHISVAs with Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Decision Record 362 - Extra Ports in FCR with Getech](#)
- [Decision Record 363 - Renewal of WPC Software Contract](#)
- [Decision Record 364 - Recipero Financial Investigation Tool](#)
- [Decision Record 365- Hardware Maintenance Contract with CDW Variance](#)
- [Decision Record 366 - Internal Audit Services with Mazars](#)
- [Decision Record 367 - Variation of ERP HR Module with Softcat](#)
- [OPFCC Decision Record 368 - Pension Forfeiture Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Decision Record 369 - Variation of ERP HR Module with Soft Cat](#)
- [Decision Record 370 - Variation of Contract for Data Network and Telephony Infrastructure with CAE Technology Services](#)
- [Decision Record 371- MOU for Funding of Business Analyst Post with the Youth Offending Service](#)
- [Decision Record 372 - Appointment of Grant Thornton as External Auditor](#)
- [Decision Record 373 - Purchase of Five Transits Vans with Ford Motor Company](#)
- [Decision Record 374 - Contract for Psychological Health Services with St John Red Cross](#)

- [Decision Record 375 - Proposed Sale of Corby Police Station with Oakwood Developers](#)
- [Decision Record 376 - Voice for Victims and Witnesses](#)
- [Decision Record 377 - Variation of ERP Payroll Expenses Module with Softcat](#)
- [Decision Record 378 - Extension to DHEP with University of Northampton](#)
- [Decision Record 379 - Variation of Data Network and Telephony Maintenance and Support with CAE Technology](#)
- [Decision Record 380 - Contract Extension to Trend Micro Anti-Virus Maintenance with Boxxe](#)
- [Decision Record 381 - Contract Variation of Mental Health Nurses in the FCR with Northants Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Decision Record 382 - Variation of Graykey Licences with Grayshift](#)
- [Decision Record 383 -Variation to Target Hardening Contract with 24-7 Locks](#)
- [Decision Record 384 -Motorcycles Contract with Kawasaki Motors](#)
- [Decision Record 385 - Communications Data Acquisition Solution with Geoff Smith Associates](#)
- [Decision Record 386 - Extension of Grounds Maintenance Contract with RG Grounds Maintenance](#)
- [Decision Record 387 - Creating Equalz 22-24](#)
- [Decision Record 388 - Contract Variation Enterprise Resource Planning HR Module with SoftCat](#)
- [Decision Record 389 - Variation to Microsoft Licences with CDW Ltd](#)
- [Decision Record 390 - Extension to PCDA's with University of Northampton](#)
- [Decision Record 391 - Variation to Pensions Administration Contract with XPS Administration](#)
- [Decision Record 392 - Emergency Vehicle Specialist Services with Mawsley Emergency Vehicle Specialist](#)
- [Decision Record 393 - Variation to Data Network and Telephony Infrastructure with CAE Technology Services](#)
- [Decision Record 394 - Contract variation for XAMN and XRY licences with Micro Systemation Ltd](#)
- [Decision Record 395 - Contract variation for Appropriate adult services](#)
- [Decision Record 396 - Contract Extension for Catering Provision at FHQ with ABM Catering](#)
- [Decision Record 397 - Extension to Access Control System with Chubb Fire and Security](#)
- [Decision Record 398 - Variation to Provision of Firearm Command Training Venues with Calder Conferences](#)
- [Decision Record 399 - Extension for Scene of Crime Consumables with WA Products](#)
- [Decision Record 400- Contract for Mobile Hardware Devices Associated Software with British Telecom](#)
- [Decision Record 401- Variation for Software Licence Support and Maintenance with WPC Software Ltd](#)
- [Decision Record 402- Mobile Hardware Devices Refresh with British Telecom](#)
- [Decision Record 403- Contract for IT Hardware with Softcat](#)
- [Decision Record 404- Body Worn Video Managed Systems with Insight Direct](#)

Key Fire and Rescue Decisions

- [NFRS Decision Record 103- Variation for Additional OH Clinics with BHSF](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 104 - Contract Extension for Vehicle Servicing Parts with Truck East](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 105 - Internal Audit Services with Mazars](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 106 - Extension to Area 1 RTC Vehicle Contract with Burtons](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 107 - Contract for Cobra System Maintenance with Cold Cut Systems](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 108 - Appointment of Grant Thornton as External Auditor](#)

- [NFRS Decision Record 109 - Officer Cars with Kia UK Ltd](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 110 - Variation of Command Control System with SSS Public Safety Ltd](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 111 - Extension of Reactive Maintenance to Appliance Bay Doors with Royal Industrial Doors](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 113 - Apprenticeship Courses with The Fire Service College](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 114 - Variation to the Command and Control System Contract with SSS](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 115 - Extension for Provision of Pallets with Brian Martin Pallets](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 116 - Operational Vans with Vauxhall](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 117 - Contract for OSB Timber with Premier Forest Products](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 118 - Emergency Vehicle Specialist Services with Mawsley Emergency Vehicle Specialist](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 119 - Variation to Level 2 3 Incident Command Courses with Katherine Lamb Associates](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 120 - Contract for Mobile Hardware Devices Associated Software with British Telecom](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 121 - Mobile Hardware Devices Refresh with British Telecom](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 122 - Estates Masterplan Services with Perfect Circle](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 123 - Contract for IT Hardware with Softcat](#)

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel considers the content of the report and its appendix.

Stephen Mold
Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner



Neighbourhood Crime Safer Streets Interventions

In the last 36 months, the Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and partners have completed the following installations across Kettering, Northampton and Wellingborough:



120

New council monitored high definition CCTV cameras installed



200

Ring doorbells installed



100

Homes fitted with security lighting



50

Apartment communal door sets



10

Underpass lighting improvement schemes



155

Alley gates, protecting residents from burglary, robbery, anti-social behaviour, fly tipping & rubbish

1,600

Front/back doors replaced



5,000 Homes received over £100 worth of free home security per household



4,600 Homes received free crime prevention and security advice



14 Park Mark accreditations and subsequent remedial works



£20,000

Worth of security products handed to the police force to promote bike safety/security



This page is intentionally left blank



Violence Against Women and Girls Safer Streets Interventions

The Northamptonshire Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and partners have installed over 40+ interventions, to help make women and girls feel safer in the Kettering and Northampton night-time economy and nearby public spaces. Below is a snapshot of some of the works introduced:



600

Officers trained in policing the night-time economy



30

ID scans installed



2

Safer Nights Out vans implemented



18

Venue sign ups to Shout Up Project



8

Help points installed



5,000

Security packs for students

15

New cameras installed



New Flare app introduced to report crime/feelings of unsafety anonymously



Safer routes reinvigorated



Taxi training scheme rolled out



1,000

Male students trained in "Stand by her" training scheme



50

Venue sign ups to Licensing SAVI (LSAVI) initiative



2

Alleyways closed



Improved lighting schemes including taxi ranks and Becketts Park



This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2:

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PLAN

Q2 23/24

PERFORMANCE REPORT



PERFORMANCE REPORT: Introduction

The Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Plan 2021-2026 sets out five priority areas:

PRIORITY 1: Prevention that keeps the county safe

PRIORITY 2: Effective and efficient response

PRIORITY 3: Protect and support those who are vulnerable

PRIORITY 4: Effective justice

PRIORITY 5: Modern services that are fit for the future

Within these priorities, the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) monitors Northamptonshire Police in respect of repeat victimisation, fraud, crime prevention, workforce recruitment, burglary, vehicle crime, anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood policing, violent crime, rural crime, knife crime, domestic abuse, positive outcomes, investigations of crime and disruption & detection of crime. Public confidence, emergency response times, early interventions and workforce characteristics are also monitored.

The OPFCC also monitors the Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service in respect of prevention activity, workforce capacity, emergency cover, specialist skills collaboration, safeguarding and response.

There are no numerical targets set within the Police, Fire & Crime Plan.

Instead, the plan monitors Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service for continuous improvement. The OPFCC recognises that monitoring performance in relation to police, crime and fire and rescue services is complex and, in many cases, cannot be determined with a single indicator. Therefore, this performance report, which informs the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, is based on a range of indicators that demonstrates all aspect of the PFCC's priorities are tracked.

This performance report will focus on the key (not all), performance indicators which are tracked for statistical exceptions from the reporting period (based on 12-month performance), as well as highlighted activities during the period, from my office, Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service.

In terms of statistical exceptions, where a performance indicator moves outside of this range, performance is termed 'exceptional'. This does not necessarily mean performance is good or bad, but that variation is greater than normal.



Q2 23/24 **Fire** Priority Commentary

At a Glance:

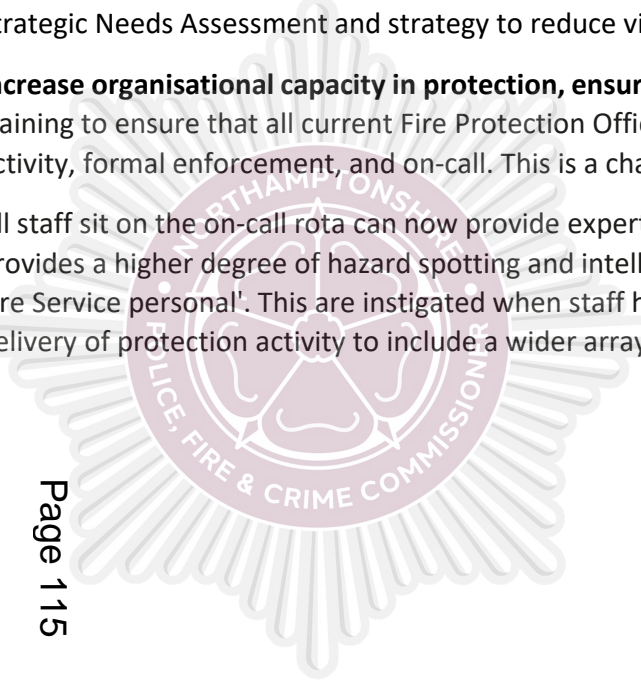
Diversify prevention activity into a wider range of topics: The prevention strategy has been developed around 5 priorities including road & water safety, early intervention and youth engagement as well as fire.

The service have recruited a complex case officer to work with partners in adult risk management, where themed work regarding safer homes is also undertaken in parallel with work relating to Domestic Abuse and Child Protection. Through the Fire Service's fire safety programme, as part of their home fire safety visits (HFSV), the service aids regarding prevention and the safety of medical equipment and devices such as airflow mattresses and home oxygen. This forms part of the nationally agreed core components for a HFSV. Enhanced HFSVs delivered by a central team incorporate advice on preventing domestic burglary, doorstep crime and fraud on behalf of the police.

The service continues to be a productive partner of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board, to produce a hoarding framework for the county in response to increased referrals for hoarding and neglected homes. With the launching of the Serious Violence Duty, the Fire Authority is a named statutory agency. NFRS, along with partners, have helped to develop a first draft of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and strategy to reduce violence in the county. This is due to be finalised in the new year.

Increase organisational capacity in protection, ensuring our warranted Protection Officers can focus on the most complex areas: The Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service have uplifted training to ensure that all current Fire Protection Officers (FPOs) are operating at the level of 'Fire Safety Inspector'. This supports the delivery and capacity for the more complex/technical fire safety activity, formal enforcement, and on-call. This is a change from 5 staff (4.5 FTE) to 8 staff (7 FTE).

All staff sit on the on-call rota can now provide expert, detailed and bespoke Fire Prevention advice and activity. The service's Community Risk Group (CRG) activity supports protection officers and provides a higher degree of hazard spotting and intelligence reporting to the central team. In the year 2022-23 protection recorded **308** jobs where the job reason was recorded as 'Intelligence form Fire Service personal'. This are instigated when staff have identified issues or have concerns when visiting a premises, either during an incident or during another activity. The service will broaden the delivery of protection activity to include a wider array of premises types. This will include premises which also offer benefits in relation to crew familiarisation and risk intelligence





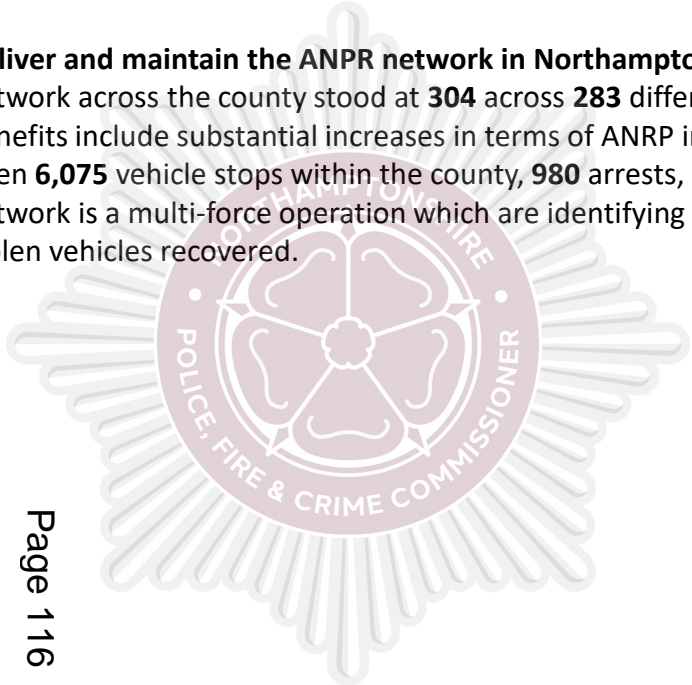
Q2 23/24 **Police** Priority Commentary

At a Glance:

Reduce Repeat Victimization: Repeat victim rates across all risk levels of domestic abuse continue to be on a downward trend. In addition to domestic abuse repeat victimisation rates reducing, this is also the case for serious sexual offences repeat victimisation rates, which is welcomed.

At the end of September 2023, the overall domestic abuse repeat rate was **44.9%**, this is **3.7%** lower than the previous 12 months. This is also the case for the Sunflower Centre, who have seen a **14%** reduction in repeat victim referrals, however, they have experienced an increase in new victim referrals. My office will continue to monitor and support the Force to enable victims of domestic to have the confidence to come forward and report harm. The VAWG agenda remains of focus nationally.

Deliver and maintain the ANPR network in Northamptonshire to ensure it supports the prevention, disruption and detection of crime: At the end of September 2023, the ANPR camera network across the county stood at **304** across **283** different sites. Over the last 9 months, the ANPR network in Northamptonshire has expanded by **20** cameras and **15** sites. Some of the benefits include substantial increases in terms of ANPR interactions and positive outcome rates. As an example, the Roads Policing Team (RPT) shows that over the last 12-months there have been **6,075** vehicle stops within the county, **980** arrests, **3,740** traffic offences and **1,572** vehicle seizures because of the ANPR network. A further example of good work because of the ANPR network is a multi-force operation which are identifying criminals coming into the region, where once identified, traffic cars from various police forces are in pursuit of them, including several stolen vehicles recovered.





Q2 23/24 **Working Together** Priority Commentary

At a Glance:

Give people the opportunity to participate in schemes that make the county safer: A new grants scheme was launched in August 2023, to tackle knife crime and youth violence. The scheme is making up to £10,000 available to voluntary and community sector organisations for projects working to tackle youth violence and knife crime in local communities. The grant scheme is now closed and information about the grants that have been awarded can be seen below:

- [Knife crime and youth violence Grant scheme \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk)

Making Northamptonshire Safer: My office continues to award grants through the Making Northamptonshire Safer Community Fund of between £3,000 and £10,000 for initiatives that support the aims of the Police, Fire and Crime Plan. As an example, three initiatives recently received funds for projects that are working with young people, diverting them away from knife crime, getting them more active and supporting youth engagement in the community. Since April 2019, **31** projects have received funding, totalling **£248,368**. The latest information on the grant scheme can be found in the article below:

- <https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/opfcc-grants/>

Invest in target hardening schemes in areas of the highest risk to reduce crime: During Q2 23/24, work concluded to improve safety for residents in the Queensway estate in Wellingborough. The Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner successfully bid for more than **£1.7 million** to spend across two different projects in the fourth round of Safer Streets funding by the Home Office, which included a project to improve the safety of women at night in Northampton and Kettering. The project on the Queensway area of Wellingborough, included the installation of **650** new doors for properties in Kiln Way and Minerva Way, in partnership with Greatwell Homes. The installation of **43** alley gates, which have been placed on several alleys that are behind homes, at side entrances and off open spaces. The final phase of the Queensway project included the installation of **15** new CCTV cameras, funded by the OPFCC as part of the project but were installed and are operated by North Northamptonshire Council.

More information on the Safer Streets project can be found below:

- [Safer Streets – Northamptonshire Police & Fire Commissioner \(northantspfcc.org.uk\)](https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk)

Develop fraud prevention programme, including reducing the risk of cyber related crime: Within my own office, the Digital and Technology Delivery Manager is key in holding the Digital, Data and Technology department (DDaT) to account and ensuring scrutiny. This role also entails cyber engagement with the public in the county and we have been working on a new cyber awareness campaign and associated assets to launch shortly. Within these assets is a new cyber awareness game which is under development and is looking to launch early 2024. The Cyber Security Forum, which meets with SME businesses and organisations, has been shortlisted for the Cyber Public Service Award at The Real Cyber Awards 2023. This is in recognition of delivering high quality cyber security support and education on a wider scale, not just within the county but also further afield.



Q2 23/24 **Fire** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Emergency Cover Arrangements: The emergency cover review has been commissioned, and work is now underway in production. The new date set for this is Q3 23/24. Business Services and the Senior Leadership Team have been fully engaged with Greston Associates who have been commissioned to complete the next phase of the emergency cover review. Initial reports will be available at the start of the Q3 23/24 PERIOD. The recommendations have been presented to the Senior Leadership Team and the Commissioner to consider a more effective and efficient service over the medium and longer term. Recommendations will include efficient crewing models relating to known risk, specialist response options and alternative fleet solutions.

Risk Profile of the County: The service formed a significant programme of works to bring about more standardised practice around Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and recognising its significance within the UK fire and rescue service. All fire and rescue services are in the process of learning and adjusting to the volume of change and the CRMP Manager at Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has undertaken strategic level engagement activity, which included individually meeting all area managers and department leads within Enabling Services. The aim of this engagement was:

- To widen the horizon scanning beyond the immediate business services team,
- To gather any vital business intelligence to sit alongside the data, and
- A first stage discussion about the development of a dedicated CRMP policy.

Since the governance change in 2019, the service have built two CRMP's and each has been approached and delivered differently. For 2023, the focus of improvement has been in developing a dedicated CRMP policy as a way to establish roles and responsibilities around the process.

A review of the CRMP was carried out in November 2023 at the Fire Accountability Board and the implementation plan for the Fire Standard has been grouped together under the themes below.

- Develop and embed a policy and process for CRMP
- Develop engagement activity and consultation – (*Links into Communication & Engagement Fire Standard*)
- Develop analysis (tools, capability, resources, credibility and breadth of data, including external sources)
- Develop evidence base for decisions (data/intelligence) – (*Link into Data Management Fire Standard and development of this function following transfer of analysis into DDaT*)
- Explore how to better use data and business intelligence (held at dept. level) - (*as above link into Head of Performance and Demand*)
- Develop opportunities/collaboration
- skills gap analysis (who/what required)
- Compliance activity that can only be undertaken at point of next CRMP build process
- Develop evaluation



Q2 23/24 **Fire** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Collaboration Working: The service continues to work with Northants Police to identify further opportunities to support a more efficient and effective use of resources through the interoperability board, with a key focus on developing collaborative response models and joint community safety initiatives alongside wider joint opportunities to improve our service to the community and reduce risk. Examples of this include where the service have taken part and supported Northamptonshire Police during the ASB weeks of action and streamlining our data through the Qlik App for arson to enable better problem solving with Community One partners.

The service have also worked in collaboration with Northamptonshire Police with police crime prevention research into suitable arson safety products to compliment other target hardening products.





Q2 22/23 **Police** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Police Officer Recruitment: Latest data from the Home Office as part of the Police Uplift Programme, shows Northamptonshire Police currently having **37.4%** (36.5% in Q4 22/23), of female officer representation. The recruitment of female officers is on an upward trajectory with aspirations for the force to move towards the representation of the County female population of **50.5%**. Similarly, the force aspires to be representative of the county's BAME population of **8.1%** and is currently achieving **4.35%** (4.30% in September 2022). Both aims are a significant undertaking both at a local and national level and could potentially take several years to mirror the county's population, however the Force with the support from my office has a proactive positive action team to achieve these aspirations.

Strengthen Local Policing: The Home Office set Northamptonshire Police an uplift target of **1,480** officers by the end of 31st March 2023. The Chief Constable and myself had a shared vision to push this further by having over **1,500** police officers and this was achieved within the same timescales. These numbers now need to be maintained and at the end of September 2023, the official headcount was at **1,518** Further intakes are planned throughout the next couple of years to maintain these numbers.

At the end of September 2023, the Force had **79** PCSOs (75 in February 2023), with further intakes over the next 12-months.

Neighbourhood Crime (burglary, vehicle crime & anti-social behaviour):

The force continues to perform well and are still recording one of the biggest reductions nationally for Neighbourhood crime against the Home Office's 2019 national baseline. The baseline reduction was **-35%**, which is the 7th biggest reduction nationally and is significantly better than the **-18%** reduction seen nationally. We're seeing increases over a rolling 12-month period of residential burglary and at the end of September 2023, this has increased by **4%** over the last 12 months. However, after seeing an above average spell earlier in 2023, there has been a clear reduction of residential burglary volumes during Q2 23/24. Volumes in September were very low and the last 3 months were the 3 lowest in the last 12-months. However, as we approach the traditional peak in demand (Nov – Jan), my office will continue to monitor the trend of vehicle crime closely. The Force and OPFCC are working on both targeted interventions and a prevention campaign.

One of the Safer Streets Round 5 bids that we have been successful in securing, will look to take an innovative approach in x2 pilot locations across the County at a combined crime prevention and property marking initiative aimed at getting householders to adopt better security routines, with a view to further reducing burglary levels.

Neighbourhood Policing: At the end of September 2023, response times continue to be slower than the previous 12 months. Elevated Grade 1 demand continues, and overall, throughout September, Grade 1 demand was **10.5%** higher than the same month last year with rural emergency incidents (+21.6%) particularly impactful. The increased calls for service has impacted on all response times, with the urban Grade 1 12-month rolling average response time was 13 minutes and 14 seconds, which is slower than the previous 12-months (12 minutes and 42 seconds). Rural Grade 1 response times have also increased by a similar amount during the same period. Clear expectations have been set with Northamptonshire Police and my office continues to review 'response' with a holistic approach such as improvements with investigation standards and progress being made with victim satisfaction levels.



Q2 23/24 **Working Together** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Communities Accessing Information:

Recent articles ensuring communities have access to information about the activities that police officers and fire crews can be viewed within the newsletter section of our website:

- [Newsletters - Northamptonshire Police & Fire Commissioner \(northantspfcc.org.uk\)](https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/newsletters)

Road Safety Fund:

My office continues to award grants through the Road Safety Community Fund of between £500 and £5,000 that help to support the Northamptonshire Strategic Road Safety Plan, developed by the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance (NSRA). In order to secure a grant, a local community simply has to identify a local road safety issue, along with a plan to resolve it. The funds that support these grants are taken exclusively from fines of people who attend speed awareness workshops within the county of Northamptonshire. Information on the grants awarded to date are detailed within the link below:

- <https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/road-safety-community-grants-awarded-final/>



PERFORMANCE REPORT: Protect & Support those who are vulnerable



Q2 23/24 **Fire** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Further develop the fire service role and expertise in safeguarding:

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service to meet and exceed the national Fire Standards for Safeguarding

- Safeguarding Standard Gap Analysis completed, one area outstanding to be discussed at Safeguarding Management Group, likely to be led by Enabling Services in relation to DBS checks.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service to develop a training needs analysis and implement planning for any gaps which are identified as a result of the analysis.

- Training Needs Analysis completed, NFCC Train the Trainer levels 1-4 safeguarding completed by 2 x DSLs at NFRS. Since then, Level 2 training for supervisors rolled out. Level 3 completed by all relevant staff, provided by NSAB and NCSP. Level 4 training to be delivered by NSAB to relevant DSLs and Strategic lead in Q3 and Q4.

Broaden protection activities into areas such as HMOs: The Fire Service has regulatory powers that apply only to the common and shared areas of HMOs such as kitchens. The Fire Protection Officers work with landlords to provide informal assistance and information to make sure that they understand how to make their HMOs as safe as they can be and allows the Officers on safety throughout the property, not just the shared, communal areas. In addition to the checks being undertaken on the fire safety within the premises, crews engage with residents, providing advice and information regarding fire appliances.

The Service have now also developed new training packages for staff to develop their ability to undertake protection checks in premises beyond HMOs The training is commencing in the Autumn of 2023. Planning is also being finalised for the Christmas exit checks at large retail sites.

PERFORMANCE REPORT: Protect & Support those who are vulnerable



Q2 23/24 **Police** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Deliver robust enforcement & awareness campaigns to reduce the number of knives on our streets: Levels of knife crime are continuing to be below forecasted levels and over the last 12-month have seen a reduction of **17.9%** in comparison to the previous 12-months. 'Usage' offences remain below average as 'threat' offences continue to account for the majority of knife crime demand within the county. Repeat suspects of knife crime has seen a year-on-year reduction of **0.8%** and is relatively stable. We're now seeing a welcomed reduction of under-18 involvement of knife crime, after a sustained period of an upward trend at the start of 2023. Under-18 involvement has largely been on a decreasing trend since April 2023 and at the end of September 2023, the Force are now seeing a **25.8%** reduction of knife crime with an under-18 suspect/offender and a **20.5%** reduction in child-on-child knife crime. Knife crime remains a matter of priority for the Force, and it is highly important that repeat perpetrators are tackled, especially those who are under-18, as doing so would have a great impact on the overall demand reduction and decline in harm caused by knife offences.

Youth and knife crime forms part of the definition of serious violence which will be tackled under the Serious Violence Duty. Under 18 knife crime will certainly be strongly considered, especially on the relationship between youth violence and serious violence. This will form part of the Strategic Needs Assessment which is to be published in December 2023. In terms of perpetrators being brought to justice, at the end of September 2023, **27.7%** of knife crimes were positively resolved over a 12-month period and is **2.1%** above the same period last year. My office have this year also funded a force wide digital and social media campaign aimed at young people and the carrying of knives. This was well received and had significant reach across local communities.

Reduce harm from domestic abuse, pursuing perpetrators, supporting victims, and using rehabilitation and prevention programmes to improve positive outcomes for victims: During Q2 23/24, domestic abuse demand returned to the expected forecasted levels after a period of a declining trend, with a year-on-year reduction of **4.5%**. Demand is forecasted to remain stable throughout the Autumn period, however, are expecting a winter demand spike around Christmas. Arrest rates have seen a concerning decline, especially on high risk, which was noticeably below **70%** at the end of September 2023 (82% December 2022), medium risk also seeing a longer-term decline. Many of these issues such as reduced levels of reporting and reduced charge rates relating to offenders are also being reported nationally and this is not well understood. Through my office attendance at Force performance meetings, I have challenged the Force to gain a better understanding of the reasons for this so we can, where required better tailor our responses. An end-to-end review of Force DA processes is due to start shortly. This will continue to be monitored closely.

The positive outcome rate continues to decline overall, the last 12 months saw a ratio of **11.9%**, which is a reduction of **1.1%** since the start of the financial year. The Forces baseline target of **13.5%** is unlikely to be met by the end of the financial year.

In terms of victim support into the Sunflower Centre, referrals from repeat victims remains stable with just over **62%** of referrals into the service coming from repeat victims. All referrals into the Sunflower Service are subsequently contacted by the team for support, advice and safeguarding.

PERFORMANCE REPORT: Protect & Support those who are vulnerable



Q2 23/24 **Working Together** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Continue to invest in support for families to reduce exclusions from school, involvement in crime & to mitigate the impact of DA: The ACE Early Intervention team continue to provide early intervention in domestic conflicts by supporting families with family and individual support which includes advice and guidance on a range of issues such as domestic abuse, health relationships, parenting, online safety, mental health of the parent or young person, substance misuse, parenting issues and school exclusions. To date, just under **1,600** family referrals have been made into the service since February 2019, with **68.1%** being accepted and worked on directly by the ACE team, with the remaining being escalated to organisations such as CIRV. Of all the accepted referrals, **95.6%** (1,035) have been closed, with all presenting needs having been met following early intervention family support.

Work with partners to tackle some of the entrenched issues in our communities and improve use of collective resources to support the most vulnerable: My office continue to use our convening powers by bringing together statutory partners on the new Serious Violence Duty which came into force in January 2023. The first draft of the Strategic Needs Assessment identifying the key areas for development under the duty (including VAWG, Knife Crime, Violence against the Person) is complete and an away day with statutory partners and community groups took place on the 7th November 2023, to look at how the serious violence duty can deliver the most effective and joined up response to serious violence and knife crime across Northamptonshire and to develop new ideas. The delivery plan needs to be in place by January 2024.





Q2 23/24 **Fire** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Ensure that enforcement activity in relation to fire safety legislation priorities public safety: Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service continue to ensure that enforcement activity in relation to fire safety legislation prioritises public safety and enforce the requirements of the fire safety order, acting when suitable and required. The number of notices are monitored within the department and recorded on the Protection Department scorecard are as follows:

- 2022/23 = 29 x Enforcement notices and 21 x Prohibition notices
- 2021/22 = 24 x Enforcement notices and 7 x Prohibition notices

The service will continue to gather evidence in respect to non-compliance, where persons have been placed at a serious and imminent risk to life and when responsible persons have failed to meet their duties and where required, evidence will be presented to legal services for consideration.





Q2 23/24 **Police** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Increasing positive outcome rates for victims of crime: The positive outcome ratio is continuing an increasing trend for the year to date (September 23), stands at **14.6%**. This is an improvement of **0.7%** in comparison to the 12-months previous. At the end of Q2 2023/24, the Force remains in a strong national position and one of the leading forces, where they are ranked 11th nationally and currently 3rd within our most similar group (MSG).

VAWG conviction rates within the county over the latest 12-month period (October 22 – September 23), is in a healthy position. The county recorded a conviction rate of **81.8%** which is 1st within our MSG and the 2nd best nationally. The month of September also saw a really strong performance for domestic abuse conviction rates with Northamptonshire recorded **93.8%**, which is the highest over the last 12-months and the 3rd highest nationally. This will continue to be monitored and discussed further at the East Midlands Local Criminal Justice Board monthly.

Monitoring the quality of investigations and work to further improve standards: The Directors Guidance Assessment (DGA) is a compliance framework for information to be sent by the police when a charging decision is sought and when other material is required during the investigation and to support a prosecution. At the end of August 2023, Northamptonshire police had an overall DGA rate of **82.9%**. This is the 2nd highest in the country and is well above the national average of **57.6%**. The Force have been consistently strong and stable throughout 2023 and it was pleasing to see that The Home Office visited the Force recently to identify best practice for national learning.

In the latest twelve months, the rate of non-convictions due to victim issues remains relatively stable overall and remains below the national average. Our non-conviction rate due to victim issues was at **21.1%** which is the 15th lowest nationally and **1.8%** below the national average of **22.9%**. We continue to monitor this to ensure we're not losing opportunities to prosecute offenders.

At the end of September 23, conviction rates are currently higher than the national average for both Magistrates and the Crown Courts. Q2 23/23 has marked good improvements, where the county's Magistrates (85.8%) and Crown Court (89.7%) conviction rates are now above the 2019 baseline. The OPFCC will continue to monitor the criminal justice system and raise any concerns at the Local Criminal Justice Board.



Q2 23/24 **Working Together** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Working with partners to ensure justice is as swift as possible: Timeliness for charging decisions by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) continues to be a concern. This is a regional issue and not just isolated to Northamptonshire. At the end of September 2023, **62.8%** of CPS charging decisions in Northamptonshire were made within the 28-day service level agreement. This is a **20.5%** reduction in comparison to the 2019 baseline achieved by Northamptonshire and quite significantly below the national average of **76.6%**.

As chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), I requested my office to work with the Force and local CJS partners to devise a set of KPIs which could be presented at the LCJB on a regular basis. As a result, a whole-system-approach has been created, with twenty-four measures providing a rounded view of performance which monitors inputs such as timeliness, processes, outcomes and quality across the CJS. The dashboard is proving to be a very valuable tool in assessing the overall performance of the local CJS and holding the relevant parties to account. The dashboard is also being seen as an exemplar of best practice across the region, with regional PCC offices looking to take a similar approach.

Provide effective support for victims and witnesses that meets their needs: Referral volumes into the VOICE adult services during Q2 23/24, have seen a **6.5%** reduction in comparison to the same period last year. Of those who accepted a level of support, **43%** of victims were victims of Domestic Abuse (DA) and DA victims continues to account for the largest group of referrals. The county has seen a reduction in DA incidents and this reduction in demand has also been mirrored into the Sunflower Centre, which has seen a reduction of **6%** in comparison to the same period last year. Despite the reduction in referrals, **36.3%** of all referrals were new victims, which is an increase of **4.8%** in comparison to the Q2 22/23 (31.5%). This will continue to be monitored by my office and the Force along with referrals by relationship type, for any prolonged changes in trend.

At the end of September 2023 the VOICE Witness Care Team reported an average witness attendance rate of **80.9%**, which is the lowest since Q2 22/23 and **4%** below the national average. Despite the dip in performance this quarter, the team are continuing to perform well under the pressures with an increasing caseload and they continue to see numerous adjournments to individual cases. My office will continue to provide support to VOICE and the LCJB is a good platform to show what impact the increasing caseload and adjournments are having on victims, witnesses and the VOICE Witness Care Team.

PERFORMANCE REPORT: Modern services that are for the future



Q2 23/24 **Working Together** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Strive to ensure that both organisations recognise, reflect, and respect the communities they serve: Since February 2020, the OPFCC Customer Service Team have been responsible for recording all complaints against the force and from this year the fire service, the informal resolution of low-level complaints and the handling of reviews. Since its inception, the team have dealt with **8,040** contacts from members of the public, ranging from complaints, queries and requests for complaint reviews. The most recorded categories for allegations that have been logged by the team include the general level of service by the Force and decisions made by the Force.

The team continue to perform well, taking on average, **1** working day to contact complainants. This is **4** days quicker than both the national and MSG average. On average, the team are taking **7** days to finalise complaint cases, which is **2** days quicker than what they achieved the same period last year and the team are substantially quicker than the national (18 days) and MSG average (13 days). As the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, I take all complaints seriously. One of the most important functions of the police and fire complaints system is to support individuals, the police and fire service and to reflect on and learn from complaints and incidents where something has gone wrong. The customer service team provides a vital source of evidence to help drive improvements in policing and within the fire and rescue service.

Development of plans to deliver shared systems, networks, and infrastructure: Progress within the Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) department has been good over the past year with new systems and upgrades in hardware. The Portfolio Tool, now fully introduced, has allowed the prioritisation of project delivery across Northamptonshire police, Northamptonshire fire and Rescue Service and the Northamptonshire Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. It provides a clear view of the pipeline, delivery and tracking of projects ensuring that all three organisations have an auditable log of when projects and their associated benefits will be achieved. We continue to leverage the investment in the Microsoft 365 programme and the most recent rollout of new mobile phones now allows officers and staff to work more collaboratively and efficiently.

The Enterprise Architecture function within DDaT has been producing technical roadmaps so that we can plot our course and take advantage of newer technologies but also ensuring we are effectively utilising our assets and reusing systems where possible. This provides a holistic view of the technology within all three organisations and enables better decision making. As of the 1st January 2023, joint savings have been achieved of £322,650.35, by combining contracts across organisations and securing multiyear deals. These savings include £15,000 in joint audits across Police and Fire Services, £14,292.99 in carrying out commercial processes to explore the market and evaluating suppliers and on average £1440 has been saved on hardware orders ensuring we are achieving the most competitive pricing.



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

30 NOVEMBER 2023

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMISSIONER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

FIRE - FINANCIAL UPDATE AS AT PERIOD 6 2023/24 (SEPTEMBER 2023)

REPORT BY THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Purpose and Context

1. This report sets out the actual financial outturn for the financial year 2022/23.
2. This report sets out at a high level the forecast financial outturn for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
3. This report updates on the 2024/25 budget, precept and financial outlook.

Financial Outturn 2022/23

4. In April 2023, the panel received a financial update report as at period 10 January 2023, members subsequently asked that the final outturn for 2022/23 be included in the next financial update report.
5. The 2022/23 year end Fire outturn was a net £129K underspend and this equated to a 0.48% variance on the £27.092m budget as follows:

Budget Group	2022/23 Variance
Chief Fire Officer Managed Budgets	843
Managed by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	(142)
Funding	(830)
Total Fire underspend	(129)

6. As shared with the panel during the year, the overspend on the Chief Fire Officer's budget was as a result of the costs of the nationally agreed firefighters pay award, which was above the budget estimate, additional costs incurred for the spate weather conditions during July and August 2022 and in-year changes made to operational model.
7. These additional costs were offset by additional one off funding from Business Rates and Government Grants, and underspends in capital financing costs and the contingency managed by the PFCC which had been highlighted earlier during the year.

Forecast Summary Revenue Outturn as at 31 March 2024

8. At this half way stage in the year, the period 6 forecast outturn shows a forecast net underspend of £395K. The forecast is attached in detail as an Appendix and is summarised below:

Budget Group	As at 30 September (P6)		
	Updated Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Chief Fire Officer Managed Budgets	29,627	29,908	281
Managed by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	571	571	0
Funding	(30,198)	(30,874)	(676)
Total Fire Forecast Outturn	0	(395)	(395)

9. The chief fire officer and funding budgets reflect the £640K additional cost for the firefighter pay award and some of the additional funding received from business rates after the budget and precept were set.
10. The most significant variations of note are:

Chief Fire Officer's Budgets

- The net overspend on the chief Fire Officer's budgets mainly relates to unavoidable and unexpected pressures in engineering and stores and estates and facilities due to inflation, unexpected maintenance pressures and the increase in utilities costs following the end of the fixed price period.
- Smaller overspends such as in the senior management team due to staff regrading reviews have been offset by underspends from staff vacancies and additional interest income due to higher than expected interest rates.

Funding

- Due to the statutory reporting dates for Business Rates and the dates of the final local government settlements, the PFCC is required to propose the Fire precept prior

to these areas being finalised by the local authorities, therefore, estimates are used and the actual position is supported by the funding reserve held for this purpose. Business rates in 2023/24 are much better than anticipated.

- Local authorities advice is that this benefit is one off and the timing of the future national Business Rates reset which will impact on Business Rate values remains uncertain. Therefore, there is no assurance that there will be permanent or sustainable business rates increases in future years. Given this uncertainty, in keeping with other authorities, NCFRA hold a funding reserve which is used to smooth the potentially volatile impact of Business Rates over the Medium Term Financial Plan.
11. The majority of the Fire budget is delegated to the Chief Fire Officer. The conditions of this allocation are set out in a formal strategic outcomes letter from the PFCC to the Chief Fire Officer each year. This letter sets out a number of requirements and expectations, including that the Chief Fire Officer will manage the resources within his delegated budget and that any overspends would be discussed with the PFCC.
 12. If the Chief Fire Officer is unable to manage within the funding envelope then options available include, but are not limited to: unavoidable or unexpected costs could be met by additional funding if available; efficiencies could be sought; funding from reserves could be provided for extenuating circumstances and/or any overspend could be taken from the following year's budget allocation.
 13. As the engineering and stores and estates pressures on the Chief Fire Officers budget are unavoidable, the PFCC has advised that for this year, the additional funding from business rates will be used to meet these costs if they cannot be contained within the envelope.
 14. Whilst Northamptonshire has established a reasonable level of reserves following the transfer of governance, they are not excessive and are still the lowest reserves nationally. Therefore, it is welcome that the current levels can be maintained to meet any future unforeseen eventualities.
 15. The PFCC scrutinises the budget monitoring throughout the year and receives regular updates at the Accountability Board.
 16. Furthermore, the PFCC receives an annual update on the internal control framework which forms the head of internal audit's annual audit opinion and is set out within the annual governance statement in the annual statement of accounts.
 17. The PFCC takes all opportunities to secure additional funding for Northamptonshire. Since January 2019, almost £5m has been received for additional Fire funding.

Financial Outlook

18. Work has already started on the 2024/25 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan. In respect of funding, we continue to link in with West and North Northamptonshire colleagues throughout the year to use consistent estimates of Fire's share of the taxbase, business rates and council tax fund.
19. The 2023 Autumn statement has not been released at the time of writing the report. Therefore, as funding information is not available, the Medium Term Financial Plan is being modelled on a number of scenarios and will be refined over the coming months.
20. The detail of the Fire allocations and the value of any top-sliced elements (reallocations) will not be available until the provisional settlement which is currently anticipated in December.
21. The Panel will recall that precept flexibility of £5 was provided in the past two financial years due to high inflation and tight financial envelopes. Given the challenging levels of inflation and the pressures on a small Fire budget, the PFCC and the Chief Fire Officer have written to Ministers and the Treasury seeking an increase to the centrally funded grants and similar precept flexibility for Northamptonshire in 2024/25.

Budget and Precept Engagement

22. Each year following the provisional settlement, the PFCC undertakes a precept consultation with residents of Northamptonshire to gather their views which help to inform his precept intentions. This consultation will be launched in the near future.

Recommendation

23. That the Police, Fire and Crime Panel considers the report.

Appendix A - Northamptonshire Fire – Forecast Outturn as at 30 September 2023 (P6)

Budget Group	As at 30 September (P6)		
	Updated Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Response Control	922	900	(22)
Response Wholetime	15,112	15,142	30
Response Retained	2,196	2,073	(123)
Business Planning & Perf	215	104	(111)
Joint Operations Team	104	104	0
Commercial Training	0	0	0
Community Prevention	600	612	12
Community Protection	564	575	11
Corporate Budgets	91	91	0
Police and Fire Shared Support Teams	2,648	2,648	0
Engineering Services & Stores	1,137	1,263	126
Digital and Technology	1,163	1,163	0
Occupational Health & Wellbeing	159	159	0
Workforce Planning	341	345	4
Estates & Facilities	1,373	1,704	331
Securing Water Supplies	88	81	(7)
Strategic Leadership Team	1,135	1,192	57
Corporate Finance	1,273	1,273	0
Training	500	523	23
Service Information Team	129	178	49
Investment Interest	(123)	(222)	(99)
Total Chief Fire Officer Managed Budgets	29,627	29,908	281
Inflation Contingency held by the PFCC	120	120	0
Capital Financing Costs	444	444	0
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	7	7	0
Total PFCC Managed Budgets	571	571	0
Total Expenditure	30,198	30,479	281
Funding	(30,198)	(30,874)	(676)
Total Fire Forecast	0	(395)	(395)

This page is intentionally left blank



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

30 NOVEMBER 2023

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

POLICE - FINANCIAL UPDATE AS AT PERIOD 6 2023/24 (SEPTEMBER 2023)

REPORT BY THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Purpose and Context

1. This report sets out the actual financial outturn for the financial year 2022/23.
2. This report sets out at a high level the forecast financial outturn for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
3. This report updates on the 2024/25 budget, precept and financial outlook.

Financial Outturn 2022/23

4. In April 2023, the panel received a financial update report as at period 10 January 2023, members subsequently asked that the final outturn for 2022/23 be included in the next financial update report.
5. The main variance to previous panel updates relates to additional grant funding was received from the Home Office in the year as a result of the better than planned police officer recruitment. This enabled the sum of £1.265m to be added to smoothing and neighbourhood reserves to support retaining Police Officer establishment at 1500 for as long as possible.

6. After this ring fenced transfer, the 2022/23 year end Policing outturn was £1.355m underspent and this equated to a 0.8% variance on the £160.4m budget as follows:

Budget Heading	Variance £'000
Budgets Consented to the Chief Constable	(2,115)
Force Investments and Savings	(216)
	(2,331)
Transfer to smoothing reserve to meet future operational requirements	1,265
Total variance	(1,066)
Managed by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner	
- PFCC Staff and Office Costs	(15)
- Commissioning and Delivery Services	(13)
- Victims and Witnesses Grants and Other Income	(432)
Total variance	(460)
Capital Financing Costs	100
Budgeted Transfer to Reserves	76
Funding	(5)
Total Policing Forecast	(1,355)
Revenue contributions to fund capital expenditure	595
Transfer to general reserves	300
Transfer to reserves to meet future needs and requirements	460
Final Outturn	0

7. Some of the underspend was used to fund capital expenditure, some was used to increase general reserves and the balance transferred to reserves which will be used by the PFCC in discussions with the CC to support future needs and requirements.

Forecast Summary Revenue Outturn as at 31 March 2024

8. At this half way stage in the year, the period 6 forecast outturn shows a forecast net underspend of £913k.
9. This equates to a projected Force underspend of £706k and a £234k underspend in the budgets managed by the PFCC, offset by transfers from reserves and funding.
10. There are other pressures which may transpire later in the year which would reduce this forecast further.
11. The majority of the Policing budget is comprised of the Force budget which the PFCC consents to the Chief Constable annually. The conditions of this allocation are set out in a formal strategic outcomes letter from the PFCC to the Chief Constable each year. This letter sets out a number of requirements and expectations, including that the Chief Constable will manage the resources within his delegated budget and that any overspends would be discussed with the PFCC at an early stage.

12. The forecast is attached in detail as an Appendix and is summarised below:

Budget Heading	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
Budgets Consented to the Chief Constable	160,589	159,883	(706)
Force Investments and Savings	446	446	0
	161,035	160,329	(706)
Managed by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner			
- PFCC Staff and Office Costs	1,276	1,252	(24)
- Commissioning and Delivery Services	6,678	6,432	(246)
- Victims and Witnesses Grants and Other Income	(2,074)	(2,038)	36
	5,880	5,646	(234)
Capital Financing Costs	2,798	2,798	0
Budgeted Transfer to Reserves	(1,561)	(1,511)	50
Funding		(23)	(23)
Total Policing Forecast	168,152	167,239	(913)

Chief Constable Budgets

13. Pressures on the Chief Constable's budget have mainly arisen from inflation and the impact of the re-opened staff pay award negotiations and tight financial management has enabled these pressures to be contained where possible or one off savings identified.

14. Key highlights are as follows:

- There is forecast to be a small underspend on the Police Pay budget. However, this budget is subject to police officer starters and leavers compared to forecast so is subject to change throughout the year.
- Additional one-off uplift funding is due to be provided to forces whose police officer recruitment is above the recruitment profile which includes Northamptonshire. Although this is not yet built into the forecast and could equate to circa £240K.
- As in previous years, given the timing of PCSO intakes, the PFCC has agreed with the Chief Constable that any PCSO underspends in the year will be transferred to reserves in order that funding can be ring fenced for neighbourhoods. As highlighted within the appendix, it is currently anticipated that £383k will be transferred to reserves. This transfer to reserves has already been accounted for in the forecast.

- The most significant variance in the chief constables budget envelope relates to an underspend as a result of additional national funding provided for police cell availability. This is one off funding and current national guidance is that will end in the current financial year.

PFCC Office and Delivery Budgets

15. The PFCC budgets are currently envisaged to underspend by £234k during the year. However, it is possible that this will increase further as the year progresses, mainly due to staff vacancies in Early Intervention and Youth.
16. Key headlines are:
 - The pressures in the PFCC Staffing, and Complaints budgets mainly relate to the higher than anticipated pay award. Underspends in the office budget such as travel and subsistence and printing have mitigated these costs.
 - It is envisaged the Police, Fire and Crime Plan Delivery Fund will be slightly overspent at the end of the year. This includes the work the PFCC commissioned on community engagement and consultation, with a particular focus on women's views to get a broader understanding of what would make them feel safer in Northamptonshire.
 - The OPFCC delivery budgets are underspent in the area of Early Intervention and Youth Provision due to staff vacancies which are taking longer to fill than originally anticipated.
 - Victims and Witnesses income due from MOJ is slightly lower than budget as this figure was not confirmed until after the budget was set.
 - An underspend has been released in Reducing Reoffending as costs in Integrated Offender Management are lower than originally envisaged.
17. The PFCC scrutinises the budget monitoring regularly throughout the year and receives regular detailed updates on Force performance at the Accountability Board.
18. Furthermore, the PFCC receives an annual update on the internal control framework which forms the head of internal audit's annual audit opinion and is set out within the annual governance statement in the annual statement of accounts.
19. The PFCC takes all opportunities to secure additional funding for Northamptonshire. Since his term in office, the PFCC has managed to secure over £18m for additional funding for Policing.

20. On behalf of Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire, the Joint Commercial and Estates Team maintain and service commercial frameworks which have been established to provide value for money procurement for public sector organisations to use and which also generates some income for Northamptonshire.
21. By the end of 2023/24 it is envisioned that around £2m will have been generated in income from these frameworks. Of this, over £1m is retained in the county to help support the budget which provides essential police and fire services for local Northamptonshire residents.
22. Recent frameworks established are the new Estates and Facilities Frameworks set up to cover pre-planned and reactive maintenance. These frameworks are open to policing and non-policing organisations across the local areas of Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. These frameworks will embed in the coming months and whilst they meet our own procurement needs, there has been a lot of interest in them already and it is anticipated that additional framework income for Northamptonshire will also be generated.

Financial Outlook

23. Work has already started on the 2024/25 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan. In respect of funding, we continue to link in with West and North Northamptonshire colleagues throughout the year to use consistent estimates of the Police's share of the taxbase and council tax fund.
24. The 2023 Autumn statement has not been released at the time of writing the report. Therefore, as funding information is not available, the Medium Term Financial Plan is being modelled on a number of scenarios and will be refined over the coming months.
25. The detail of the Police allocations and the value of any top-sliced elements (reallocations) will not be available until the provisional settlement which is currently anticipated in December.
26. The Panel will recall that precept flexibility of £15 was provided in 2023/24 as part of the three year Home Office funding settlement for Policing due to maintaining police officer levels and as a result of high inflation and tight financial envelopes.

Budget and Precept Engagement

27. Each year following the provisional settlement, the PFCC undertakes a precept consultation with residents of Northamptonshire to gather their views which help to inform his precept intentions. This consultation will be launched in the near future.

Recommendation

28. That the Police, Fire and Crime Panel considerS the report.

Appendix A - Northamptonshire Police – Forecast Outturn as at 30 September 2023 (P6)

Budget Heading	Budget	Outturn	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Budgets Managed by the Chief Constable			
Non Devolved Budgets			
Police Pay and Oncosts	81,997	81,850	(147)
Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)*	3,285	2,902	(383)
Other Pensions Costs	1,151	1,320	169
	86,433	86,072	(361)
*Anticipated PCSO Underspend transferred to neighbourhood reserve		383	383
	86,433	86,455	22
Devolved Budgets			
Devolved Operational Budgets	19,903	19,411	(492)
Control Room	6,308	6,240	(68)
Enabling Departments	28,386	28,269	(117)
Corporate Services	3,790	3,732	(58)
Central Budgets	7,930	8,034	104
Collaboration Units	7,839	7,742	(97)
	74,156	73,428	(728)
Budgets consented to the Chief Constable	160,589	159,883	(706)
Investment and Savings	446	446	0
Chief Constable	161,035	160,329	(706)
Budgets Managed by the PFCC			
PFCC Office Budget			
Staff and Office Costs	1,475	1,451	(24)
Contribution to Governance Costs from Fire	(199)	(199)	0
	1,276	1,252	(24)
Commissioning and Delivery Budgets			
Victims and Witnesses Services			
- Costs	2,724	2,714	(10)
- MOJ Grants and transfer from reserves	(1,999)	(1,963)	36
	725	751	26
Commissioning & Grants	100	100	0
- Proceeds of Crime and Property Act funding to support grants	(75)	(75)	0
Customer Services - Complaints	181	186	5
Delivery, Accountability and Digital	341	341	0
Domestic and Sexual Abuse Provision	138	138	0
Early Intervention & EI DA support	2,373	2,194	(179)
Joint Communications Team With Fire (net)	105	105	0
Reducing Reoffending	716	654	(62)
	4,604	4,394	(210)
Total Budgets Managed by the PFCC	5,880	5,646	(234)
Capital Financing Costs	2,798	2,798	0
Budgeted Transfer from Reserves	(1,561)	(1,511)	50
Funding		(23)	(23)
Total Policing forecast	168,152	167,239	(913)

This page is intentionally left blank

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

30 NOVEMBER 2023

Report Title	Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Work Programme
Report Author	James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, West Northamptonshire Council James.edmunds@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers		
West MO (for West and joint papers)	Catherine Whitehead	22/11/2023
West S151 (for West and joint papers)	Martin Henry	16/11/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Outline Work Programme

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report is intended to enable the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel to review overall progress with the development and delivery of its 2023/24 work programme and to consider specific related matters.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The report invites the Panel to review the latest version of its outline work programme for 2023/24 and to endorse this subject to any changes that the Panel considers to be necessary.
- 2.2. The report also invites the Panel to confirm the date for its final regular meeting in 2023/24.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel:
- a) Endorses the latest version of its outline work programme for 2023/24, subject to any changes that the Panel considers to be necessary.
 - b) Agrees that the final regular Panel meeting in 2023/24 be held on 14 March 2024.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendations are intended to support the effective operation of the Panel and the delivery of its statutory responsibilities during 2023/24.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and supporting legislation give various specific responsibilities to the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel (“the Panel”). These are principally as follows:

- Scrutinising and reporting on the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC)’s proposed Police and Fire and Rescue precepts
- Scrutinising and reporting on the PFCC’s Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan
- Scrutinising and reporting on the PFCC’s Annual Report on the delivery of Police and Crime Plan objectives and on the annual Fire and Rescue Statement reporting compliance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework
- Scrutinising and reporting on proposed appointments by the PFCC to certain positions (: Deputy PFCC; Chief Executive; Chief Finance Officer; Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police; and Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service)
- Dealing with complaints from members of the public about the conduct of the PFCC.

- 5.2 In addition, the legislation referred to in paragraph 5.1 above gives the Panel the general responsibility to review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the PFCC in connection with the discharge of his functions and to make reports or recommendations to the PFCC with respect to these matters. The Panel is required to carry out its role with a view to supporting the PFCC in effectively exercising his functions.

- 5.3 It is standard practice for the Panel to set an annual work programme to provide a framework within which it carries out its functions and the practical tasks these involve. The work programme is made up of a combination of statutory and discretionary scrutiny work; matters relating to the operation of the Panel; and any supporting activities such as briefings or training. The work programme covers a rolling 12-month period. The work programme is considered at the first Panel meeting in the municipal year. It is then kept under regular review by the Panel and modified or updated as necessary, with a view to ensuring that it is focussed on the aim of using available capacity to best effect.

- 5.4 It should be noted that the work programme does not represent the sum total of activity that the Panel may carry out during that period. The work programme focusses on the regular meetings of the Panel and on the functions that it must carry out at set points during the year, such as scrutiny of the PFCC’s proposed precepts and Annual Report. The Panel carries out other functions when the need to do so arises, which must then be added to the planned work programme. Scrutiny of a proposed senior appointment by the PFCC is a case in point as the need for the Panel to do this may arise at any time, it is one of the Panel’s statutory functions, and it

requires the Panel to hold a meeting to carry out a confirmation hearing with the candidate in order to make a recommendation on the proposed appointment.

6. Issues and Choices

Work programme – general

- 6.1 The Panel considered its outline work programme at its meeting on 15 June 2023 and identified items of business that it wished to consider during the year ahead alongside its mandatory tasks. The resulting outline work programme is included with this report (at Appendix A).
- 6.2 The work programme should not be seen as fixed and it is open to the Panel to review and modify it at any time as the municipal year progresses. The work programme can be informed by input from a range of sources, including suggestions from individual Panel members and from the PFCC. The Panel should consider suggested business from all sources on its merits, with a view to maintaining a work programme that reflects the Panel's remit, has the support of Panel members, is realistically deliverable within available resources and has the potential to produce the most worthwhile outcomes.

Scrutiny of support for early intervention activity

- 6.3 The Panel agreed in 2022/23 to carry out a piece of task-and-finish scrutiny work on early intervention activity with young people at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity in Northamptonshire. A working group was appointed for this purpose and met three times during the first half of 2023, although it was still at an early stage of information-gathering. The Panel agreed at its meeting on 15 June 2023 that the work should be progressed in order to produce a report back to the Panel as soon as possible.
- 6.4 Since that resolution the Panel has needed to give its overriding attention to matters relating to, and arising from, the appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer by the PFCC in July 2023. This has meant that the work on early intervention has been in abeyance during recent months. There have also been related changes to the context in which the work was originally commenced. In light of this situation, as part of reviewing its overall work programme the Panel is invited to confirm whether the task-and-finish scrutiny work on early intervention activity should be resumed.

Date of the final regular Panel meeting in 2023/24

- 6.5 The Panel agreed its meeting schedule for 2023/24 at its meeting on 2 February 2023. This schedule included a Panel meeting on 18 April 2024. This date should not have been included in the draft schedule presented to the Panel as it is within the pre-election period for the PFCC election on 2 May 2024. The pre-election period is due to start on 26 March 2024 and it would not be appropriate for the Panel to meet after this date.
- 6.6 The need to find a new date for the final regular Panel meeting in 2023/24 was brought to the attention of the Panel at its meeting on 15 June 2023. The Panel agreed that this meeting should

be moved to an earlier date. Due to other business since then there has not been an opportunity to ask the Panel to confirm a new date.

- 6.7 It is now proposed that the final regular Panel meeting in 2023/24 should be held on 14 March 2024. This date uses the Panel's standard meeting day, is well before the start of the pre-election period and takes account of current scheduled meetings at North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC): NNC is due to have an Executive meeting on the morning of 14 March 2024; WNC has a Council meeting on the evening of 21 March 2024. It is open to the Panel to agree a different date for its final regular meeting in 2023/24 if it identifies one that it prefers to 14 March 2024.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 There are no specific resources or financial implications associated with this report. The normal operation of the Panel is supported by grant funding that the Panel's host authority can claim from the Home Office for the purpose of maintaining a panel for the Northamptonshire Police area.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposal.

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 The Panel should ensure that its work programme enables it to carry out its statutory role and functions effectively. Factors that might represent a risk to this could include setting a work programme that did not reflect the Panel's statutory functions; that was unfocussed or included too much business to be realistically deliverable; or that was fixed at the start of the year and did not allow the flexibility to respond to issues that might subsequently arise. These risks should be mitigated by the Panel reviewing its work programme and any associated matters at each of its normal meetings during the municipal year. This will enable the Panel to consider any changes to existing arrangements that may seem necessary, with a view to ensuring that the work programme and the specific activities contained within it remain deliverable within the Panel's overall capacity and the resources available to support it.

8. Background Papers

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

Policing and Crime Act 2017

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Rules of Procedure

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel – Outline Work Programme

MEETING DATE	STATUTORY BUSINESS	DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS	BUSINESS RELATING TO PANEL OPERATION	OTHER BUSINESS
30 November 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFCC’s response to the Panel report on decisions relating to the appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer - PFCC’s Delivery update - PFCC’s Finance updates - Joint Independent Audit Committee Annual Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work programme - Complaints and conduct matters update 	
6 February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFCC’s proposed Police precept for 2024/25 - PFCC’s proposed Fire and Rescue precept for 2024/25 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work programme - 2024/25 meeting dates - Arrangements for recruitment of independent co-opted Panel members 	
20 February 2024 (Reserve meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFCC’s revised Police precept for 2024/25 [if required] and/or - PFCC’s revised Fire and Rescue precept for 2024/25 [if required] 			

MEETING DATE	STATUTORY BUSINESS	DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS	BUSINESS RELATING TO PANEL OPERATION	OTHER BUSINESS
14 March 2024 (subject to confirmation)		- PFCC's Delivery update - PFCC's Finance updates	- Work programme - Complaints and conduct matters update	
June 2024		- Introduction to the PFCC elected in May 2024 and their priorities	- Appointment of Panel Chair and Deputy Chair - Appointment of independent co-opted members - Work programme - Appointment of Complaints Sub Committee members	
September 2024			- Work programme - Complaints and conduct matters update	

Additional topics not yet scheduled

The Panel agreed at its meeting on 15 June 2023 that its work programme should include reports from the PFCC on the following matters:

- (A) Action plans developed to address areas for improvement in service delivery by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service as identified in the HMICFRS 2021/22 inspection.
- (B) The outcomes of the IPSOS Mori public consultation exercise on community safety in Northamptonshire carried out in 2022/23
- (C) The latest version of the PFCC's full Estates Strategy
- (D) The local impact of implementing the Serious Violence Duty under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022
- (E) The local impact of delays in the Criminal Justice System

Briefings / Training (open to all Panel members)

(A) Briefing sessions with the Chief Constable and with the Chief Fire Officer

The Panel generally includes in its work programme briefing sessions, held at least annually, with the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police and the Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service. These sessions are intended to give an overview of the operating environment for the two organisations and their key priorities and challenges, to help to inform the Panel in carrying out its role of scrutinising and supporting the PFCC. The Panel last met with both chiefs on 27 May 2022 and again with the Chief Constable on 1 December 2022. The Panel agreed at its meeting on 15 June 2023 to continue this approach. The ability to organise a briefing session has since been affected by issues relating to each position.

(B) A workshop session on the development of the PFCC's proposed precepts for 2024/25 in January 2024

The Panel usually holds a workshop session with the PFCC and the OPFCC Chief Finance Officer in January of each year to consider the financial environment and key factors informing the development of the PFCC's budget and precept proposals. This session feeds into scrutiny of the final proposals by the whole Panel at its formal meeting in February. The Panel agreed at its meeting on 15 June 2023 to continue this approach.

(C) Training for Panel members

The Panel discussed the potential to organise more training for Panel members at its meeting on 15 June 2023. The Panel agreed that training should be organised for members on effective scrutiny by Police, Fire and Crime panels. A training session on this topic was held on 22 November 2023.

Further Information

(A) Statutory Business

PFCC's Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement – The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) is required to produce an Annual Report on the exercise of the PFCC's police and crime functions during the previous financial year and the progress made in meeting objectives set out in the PFCC's Police and Crime Plan. The PFCC is also required to publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the priorities set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The Panel must review and report on both the Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement as soon as practicable after they are received.

PFCC's proposed Police and Fire and Rescue precepts – The PFCC's proposed precepts must be reviewed and reported on by the Panel before they can be issued. The Panel has the power to veto a proposed precept, in which case the PFCC is required to produce a revised proposal that must also be reviewed by the Panel at the reserve meeting included in the outline work programme (if the Panel does not veto either of the proposed precepts the reserve meeting will not be held). The steps involved in this process must take place by specific deadlines set in legislation.

(B) Discretionary Business

PFCC's Delivery Update – This is a regular report setting out actions by the PFCC supporting progress towards the delivery of the strategic outcomes set out in his Police, Fire and Crime Plan. The Delivery Update also includes contextual information about Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service performance.

PFCC's Finance Updates – These are two regular reports setting out the latest in-year position for the budgets for policing and the Office of the PFCC and for the budget for the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority.

Joint Independent Audit Committee Annual Report – The Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) is responsible for providing independent assurance of the corporate governance, risk management and financial control arrangements operated by the PFCC and the Chief Constable. The JIAC's Annual Report is customarily presented by its Chair to the Panel, to reflect the complementary roles of the two bodies.

(C) Business relating to Panel operation

Complaints and conduct matters update – The Panel has adopted specific arrangements to carry out its responsibilities for dealing with complaints and conduct matters relating to the PFCC. These include the provision by the host authority Monitoring Officer of a half-yearly monitoring report about all matters dealt with in the preceding period. In this way the Panel is able to monitor the operation of the arrangements it has made to deliver this aspect of its statutory responsibilities.

Recruitment of independent co-opted members – The Panel is required to include a minimum of two independent co-opted members in its membership and has previously secured approval from the Home Secretary to increase this to three. The co-option of independent members is intended to assist in supporting the aim that the membership of the Panel, when taken as a whole, has the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to enable it to carry out its functions effectively. Independent co-opted members should be drawn from the local community through an open recruitment and selection process. The sitting independent co-opted members of the Panel were appointed in 2020 for a four-year term running until the day before the date of the first Panel meeting in the 2024/25 municipal year. The Panel will need to consider arrangements to advertise for and recruit independent co-opted members to join the Panel from this point.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

30 NOVEMBER 2023

Report Title	Complaints and Conduct Matters Update
Report Author	James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, West Northamptonshire Council James.edmunds@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers		
West MO (for West and joint papers)	Catherine Whitehead	22/11/2023
West S151 (for West and joint papers)	Martin Henry	16/11/2023

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Record of the outcomes of complaints considered during September – November 2023

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report is intended to provide the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel with an update on complaints and conduct matters relating to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire, in accordance with arrangements agreed by the Panel.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Panel is advised that during the period September – November 2023 two new non-criminal complaints relating to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner were recorded. These complaints were considered by the Panel’s Complaints Sub Committee in accordance with the Panel’s Informal Resolution Protocol. There are no other outstanding complaints or conduct matters at the time of writing this report.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel notes the update.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendation is intended to assist the Panel to oversee the operation of arrangements it has adopted to deliver its statutory responsibilities concerning complaints and conduct matters relating to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 set out certain responsibilities on Police and Crime Panels for dealing with complaints against Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioners (DPCCs) and conduct matters. The Regulations define these terms as follows:

- “Complaint”: means a complaint about the conduct of the PCC or DPCC.
- “Conduct”: includes acts, omissions, statements and decisions (whether actual, alleged or inferred).
- “Serious Complaint”: means a complaint made about conduct which constitutes or involves or appears to constitute or involve a criminal offence.
- “Conduct Matter”: means a case where there is an indication that the PCC or DPCC may have committed a criminal offence (for example, where an indication comes to light through media reporting).

- 5.2 In summary, the Regulations require the Panel to make suitable arrangements for:

- Receiving and recording complaints and conduct matters.
- Initial sorting of complaints and conduct matters to determine whether they appear to have a criminal element that requires referral to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), which is the body responsible for their investigation.
- Informal Resolution of complaints that do not have a criminal element. Informal Resolution is intended to represent a locally-agreed process for resolving a complaint, involving engagement with the complainant and the person complained against. It is not an investigation of the complaint: the Panel is prohibited from taking any action intended to gather information about a complaint other than inviting the comments of the complainant and the person complained against.

- 5.3 The Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel has previously agreed arrangements for delivering its statutory responsibilities relating to complaints and conduct matters. The main elements of these arrangements are:

- Delegation to the Monitoring Officer of the host authority of the Panel’s responsibilities for receiving, recording and referring complaints and conduct matters.
- Establishment of a Complaints Sub Committee with delegated responsibility for the Informal Resolution of non-criminal complaints, according to an agreed Informal Resolution Protocol.
- Provision by the Monitoring Officer of a half-yearly monitoring report to the Panel about all complaints and conduct matters dealt with in the preceding period, the actions taken (including any obligations to act, or refrain from acting, that have arisen under the Regulations

but have not yet been complied with or have been contravened) and the outcome of the process.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The last update report was presented to the Panel at its meeting on 20 April 2023, reporting the position for September 2022 – March 2023. The next was due to be presented to the Panel meeting on 7 September 2023 but was rescheduled due to that meeting being used to scrutinise decisions by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner connected with the appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer. This update report therefore covers the period April – November 2023.
- 6.2 As noted in paragraph 2.1 above, two new non-criminal complaints relating to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner were recorded during the period covered by this update report. These complaints were considered by the Panel’s Complaints Sub Committee in accordance with the Panel’s Informal Resolution Protocol. The records of the outcomes are included with this report (at Appendix A). There are no other outstanding complaints or conduct matters at the time of writing this report.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 There are no resource or financial implications arising from the proposal.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposal.

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 It is important that the Panel deals with complaints and conduct matters in accordance with statutory requirements and the arrangements that that Panel has adopted to deliver its specific responsibilities. In this context it should be recognised that the complaints and conduct matters update is not presented to the Panel with a view to it discussing matters relating to individual complaints, which would be inappropriate. Rather, the update provides the Panel with an overview of complaints dealt with during the preceding period in order to support the Panel’s role of monitoring the operation and effectiveness of the arrangements that it has adopted.

8. Background Papers

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012

Police and Crime Panel Regulations: Non-Criminal Complaints and Misconduct – Home Office Guidance

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Rules of Procedure

This page is intentionally left blank

Outcome of consideration by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Complaints Sub Committee of complaints concerning the conduct of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire

Reference	Date recorded	Nature of the case made by the complainant (summary)	Actions taken	Outcome(s) of Informal Resolution
01/2023	01/08/2023	The proposed appointment of Nicci Marzec as interim Chief Fire Officer involved a failure by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest when making a decision and that appears to represent a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011 and may also represent a criminal offence of misconduct in public office.	The complaint was recorded and referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct, which determined that it did not need to investigate the complaint further. The complaint was then referred to the Panel's Complaints Sub Committee to consider in accordance with the Informal Resolution Protocol. The Complaints Sub Committee met on 8 September 2023 and considered the complaint.	<p>The Complaints Sub Committee considered information relating to the complaint provided to it by the complainant and by the PFCC. The Sub Committee noted that on 7 September 2023 the Panel had scrutinised at length the situation that gave rise to the complaint. This included the basis for the PFCC's decision regarding the appointment of Ms Marzec as interim Chief Fire Officer without a confirmation hearing; the nature of the connection between the PFCC and Ms Marzec; and the potential for this connection to have resulted in a conflict of interest or breach of the Code of Conduct for the Office of the PFCC. The Panel's scrutiny resulted in it identifying areas for improvement and making recommendations intended to address these.</p> <p>Having taken into account the purpose of informal resolution and the extent of the scrutiny by the Panel, the Sub Committee concluded that there were not any additional actions it could take that would assist in dealing with the complaint beyond the recommendations already made by the Panel. The Sub Committee therefore agreed to treat the complaint as already having been resolved.</p>

02/2023	18/08/2023	<p>In appointing Nicci Marzec as Chief Fire Officer the PFCC did not meet the legal requirements to consult with the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, whilst the appointment of someone the PFCC described as a close friend was also a cause for concern.</p>	<p>The complaint was recorded and referred to the Panel's Complaints Sub Committee to consider in accordance with the Informal Resolution Protocol. The Complaints Sub Committee met on 8 September 2023 and considered the complaint.</p>	<p>The Complaints Sub Committee considered information relating to the complaint provided to it by the complainant and by the PFCC. The Sub Committee noted that on 7 September 2023 the Panel had scrutinised at length the situation that gave rise to the complaint. This included the basis for the PFCC's decision regarding the appointment of Ms Marzec as interim Chief Fire Officer without a confirmation hearing; the nature of the connection between the PFCC and Ms Marzec; and the potential for this connection to have resulted in a conflict of interest or breach of the Code of Conduct for the Office of the PFCC. The Panel's scrutiny resulted in it identifying areas for improvement and making recommendations intended to address these.</p> <p>Having taken into account the purpose of informal resolution and the extent of the scrutiny by the Panel, the Sub Committee concluded that there were not any additional actions it could take that would assist in dealing with the complaint beyond the recommendations already made by the Panel. The Sub Committee therefore agreed to treat the complaint as already having been resolved.</p>
---------	------------	---	--	--