

## **Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel**

Minutes of a meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel held at the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton NN1 1DE on Thursday 17 June 2021 at 1.00pm.

Present           Councillor Gill Mercer (Chair)  
                      Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage (Deputy Chair)  
                      Councillor Jon-Paul Carr  
                      Councillor Dorothy Maxwell  
                      Councillor Zoe McGhee  
                      Councillor Russell Roberts  
                      Councillor Anna King  
                      Councillor David Smith  
                      Councillor Winston Strachan  
                      Mr Robert Mehaffy  
                      Mrs Anita Shields  
                      Miss Pauline Woodhouse

Also in           Stephen Mold, Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner  
attendance       Councillor Muna Cali, West Northamptonshire Council  
                      Deborah Denton, Joint Head of Communications, Office of the Police,  
                      Fire & Crime Commissioner  
                      James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, West  
                      Northamptonshire Council  
                      Helen King, Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime  
                      Commissioner  
                      Nicci Marzec, Director for Early Intervention, Head of Paid Service and  
                      Monitoring Officer, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner  
                      Catherine Whitehead, Director of Legal & Democratic and Monitoring  
                      Officer, West Northamptonshire Council

### **1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillor Pritchard. Apologies for lateness were received from the Director of Legal & Democratic and Monitoring Officer, West Northamptonshire Council.

### **2. Appointment of the Panel Chair for 2021/22**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager invited nominations for the Chair of the Panel for 2021/22. Councillor Mercer was proposed and seconded by Councillors Gonzalez De Savage and Maxwell respectively. There were no further nominations.

**RESOLVED that: Councillor Gill Mercer be appointed as Chair of the Panel for 2021/22.**

3. **Appointment of the Panel Deputy Chair for 2021/22**

The Chair invited nominations for the Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2021/22. Councillor Gonzalez De Savage was proposed and seconded by Councillor Strachan and the Chair respectively. There were no further nominations.

**RESOLVED that: Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2021/22.**

4. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor McGhee declared that she worked for CSD Activity Camps, which had received funding from the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire in the past.

5. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed new and returning Panel members to the meeting, which was the first time that the Panel had met in-person since March 2020. The Chair congratulated councillor members on their election in May 2021 and their appointment to the Panel.

The Chair highlighted that the Panel had to consider some substantial items of business at the current meeting and encouraged members to ensure that their contributions were focussed and strategic.

The Chair advised that she had participated that morning in a meeting relating to the Strategic Review of Policing in England and Wales being carried out by the Police Foundation. A report on the first part of the Review had been published; work on the second part was now underway. The Review had involved a wide range of people from across the country and was open to new ideas. Crime prevention was its top priority, which reflected the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire (PFCC)'s own view.

6. **Minutes**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that the draft minutes had been circulated after the previous Panel meeting to members who had attended.

**RESOLVED that: the minutes of the Police, Fire & Crime Panel meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be agreed.**

Matters arising from the minutes

*19/21 Fire & Rescue Authority Budget Update*

The Chief Finance Officer updated the Panel that £41,000 had been charged to the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust for supporting activity carried out by Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings from the inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Policing and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) of NFRS's response to the pandemic could be

circulated to the Panel to provide information previously requested on the health and wellbeing support provided to NFRS personnel.

#### *23/21 Future use of Remote Meetings*

The Chair advised that she had written to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government encouraging an extension of the provisions permitting Police & Crime panels to hold remote meetings. She had not received a response directly but the government had since indicated that it would not take this approach, even though potential alternatives it had suggested such as delegated decision-making were not applicable to panels.

#### *18/21 Police & Crime Plan Delivery update*

Councillor Maxwell questioned whether consideration could be given to providing personal alarms for all girls in years 12-13 in the county, in the context of the death of Sarah Everard. The PFCC advised that this suggestion could potentially be fed into a piece of focus group work on violence against women and girls due to take place in September 2021.

### **7. Introduction to the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's priorities and challenges**

The Chair congratulated the PFCC on his re-election in May and invited him to comment on his priorities and challenges at this point.

The PFCC welcomed the opportunity to give the Panel an insight into his priorities for the next three years and made the following points:

- He would produce new Police & Crime and Fire & Rescue plans by March 2022, which he would present to the Panel before the end of 2021. The new plans would not involve a radical change of direction but would seek to build on the progress made during his first term.
- The development of his proposed precepts for 2022/23 would be another key area of work. He invited the Panel to repeat the workshop session on the precept held in January 2021 and also offered to put on a finance workshop session in August or September 2021.
- The resources for NFRS were now at a sustainable level and the position reached was ahead of the schedule set at the time of the governance transfer. Over £4.2m of one-off grants had been secured since 2019. There remained challenges in relation to financing the NFRS Medium Term Financial Plan and a new capital programme had been drafted for discussion with the Minister.
- Potential changes relating to pension schemes could produce significant financial pressures. He would seek to make representations on this matter as the position developed.
- He would continue to make the case for changing the current policing funding formula and this issue remained the subject of discussion.
- Northamptonshire had been affected by delays in the completion of external audits. The last statement of accounts for Northamptonshire Police was due to be

signed off imminently but this was not the case for the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) and Voice. He considered that this was not an acceptable situation and would seek to highlight it at national level.

- He had previously sought to ensure that the Panel had access to relevant information and would continue to take this approach. He had previously offered to facilitate annual briefing sessions for the Panel with the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer. He also invited the Panel to visit Darby House when COVID-19 restrictions permitted this.
- He had provided significant investment in youth services during his first term and sought to build on this further in future. He believed strongly in acting to help divert young people from entering the criminal justice system.
- Prevention activity would be complemented by action to create a more hostile environment for criminals in Northamptonshire such as investment in frontline policing, Automated Number Plate Recognition systems and Interceptor vehicles.
- Local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire had created a unique opportunity to refresh and strengthen the local approach to partnership working.
- He was proud of the significant amount that had been done during his first term in office. It was now important to maintain momentum and build on this further.

The Panel considered the PFCC's comments and members made the following points during the course of discussion:

- It was questioned whether there was scope to change existing external audit arrangements in the context of local government reorganisation.
- Residents in rural areas of Northamptonshire could feel overlooked in relation to policing and there should be a more visible police presence in villages.
- Neighbourhood policing team activity in Weedon earlier that day had been well-received by residents. It would be helpful to repeat it on a Saturday.
- The priority that the PFCC gave to addressing knife-crime was welcome. Further information was sought about how detached youth workers were being deployed to respond to the recent death of a young person in Corby, the outcomes sought from their work and how local councillors could support them.
- The force and NFRS should seek to make their personnel more diverse to be more reflective of the different communities in the county.
- The force and NFRS were both organisations that had a relatively low turnover in personnel, which made it more difficult to change demographic make-up.
- Investment in additional police officers was not producing a benefit in the county. Anti-social behaviour remained a significant issue. This should be addressed by deploying police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) so that they were visible to communities and could engage with them. Local taxpayers who could be in difficult circumstances had been asked to pay a higher police precept: they should see a return from this.

The PFCC made the following additional points during the course of discussion:

- Northamptonshire Police had 1,367 police officers at the last count, which was 200 more than when he had taken office. The force would reach a complement of 1,500 officers in the next two years, which would be the highest number ever. However, the force was responsible for protecting nearly 800,000 people, which represented a less favourable ratio than in an area such as London. The fact that Northamptonshire was close to London also affected crime in the county.
- The Chief Constable was responsible for the deployment of police officers. However, the force had been put in a position to double the number of officers in neighbourhood policing teams by 2022 and to have named officers for particular areas. Other initiatives such as the forthcoming launch of two 'Beat Buses' would also support visible policing around the county.
- Northamptonshire taxpayers had supported continuing improvement by the force. However, the county would benefit from valuable additional resources if it was funded at the same level as Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire or Leicestershire. The government had committed to review the police funding formula.
- NFRS now had a whole-time establishment of 254 firefighters, which included an additional 12 recruited recently. NFRS did not find it difficult to recruit full-time firefighters, although there were more challenges relating to retained crewing.
- The principal continuing challenges for NFRS related to the level of base budget funding, the age of some of its assets and the need to put in place a capital programme that was sustainable in the long term.
- He expressed his condolences to the family of the young person killed in Corby. The OPFCC had prioritised and provided funding to support detached youth work in the county. The County Schools Challenge would use a card game about knife crime invented by a local young person as part of work to address this issue.
- He remained committed to the use of PCSOs. A new intake had just been taken on by the force and there were now just under 90 PCSOs in the county. There had been around 250 several years ago but Northamptonshire County Council had funded some of these officers. As PFCC he had to make tough choices about how to use finite resources. Residents should see a benefit from investment in neighbourhood policing.
- He agreed that the force and NFRS should reflect the communities that they served and considerable effort had been put into work supporting this aim. Good progress had been made with recruiting female officers. There remained challenges in areas such as the diversity of the NFRS establishment and retention of young police officers. This was a complex area and change took time to achieve.

The Chief Finance Officer advised during discussion that Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) was responsible for contracting external auditors. PSAA was currently consulting on future contracts. Changes to existing arrangements might be possible in future but not at the current time.

The Director for Early Intervention provided additional information in response to point made by members during the course of discussion as follows:

- The Youth Service operated on a countywide basis: staff were not allocated to particular areas, which meant that resources could be deployed to work on priority issues that occurred in any part of the county.
- The Youth Service was now carrying out outreach work in Corby.
- The Youth Service would carry out follow-up work after targeted activity by the force. It was also linked in to the custody suites in the county and provided support to young people who had been arrested. The Youth Service currently had 11 members of staff, with some vacancies. It was hoped to expand provision in future.

**RESOLVED that:**

- a) The Panel requests to be provided with further information on the demographic make-up of recent intakes of recruits to Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service.**
- b) The Panel notes the update on the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's priorities and challenges.**

**8. Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2020/21**

The PFCC presented the Annual Report, outlining work done during 2020/21 and progress towards the delivery of his priorities. The PFCC highlighted the following points:

- The previous year had been dominated by the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, which was the worst public health emergency to affect the country in 100 years. However, he had still worked to make the most of the resources available to Northamptonshire.
- Additional funding provided to Northamptonshire Police translated into the highest number of police officers since the 2000s, whilst NFRS had also been strengthened. This provided a basis for continuing improvement in both cases. The Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer were also working together to share support services to maximise efficiency.
- He thanked the team in the OPFCC for their support and praised the dedication shown by force and NFRS staff members during the pandemic.

The Panel considered the Annual Report.

A Panel member noted that the Annual Report identified the ambition to increase the force's professional curiosity and knowledge of trauma-informed practice in support of the priority of prevention and early intervention – increase support for the most vulnerable and questioned whether the need to take this action represented a concern. The PFCC made the following points:

- This action linked back to the 2018/19 inspection of the force by HMICFRS, which had identified that it was not investigating crime effectively enough. In addition, the force had recruited nearly 500 officers in recent years. A considerable amount of work was therefore being done to ensure that the force was able to provide members of the public with an effective service at all stages from the reporting of a crime to the submission of a case to the Crown Prosecution Service.

- Overall, he was confident that the force was now in a significantly better position than it had been when he took office. He had recently met with the family of David Brickwood concerning failings in the force's investigation of his murder in 2015. He considered that these failings would not occur now.
- In 2016 the number of overdue visits to people on the Management of Sexual Offenders & Violent Offenders register in Northamptonshire had been 600-700, which compared to around 50 now. This was another reflection of the progress made by the force in this time.

The Director for Early Intervention subsequently advised that trauma-informed practice involved taking a considered view of how previous trauma might affect the parties involved in an incident to support a more effective police response. It was intended that as many personnel in the force as possible should be familiar with this approach.

A Panel member challenged the PFCC that the Annual Report did not say enough about progress towards meeting his Police & Crime Plan objectives, making the following points:

- The overall vision set out in the Police & Crime Plan was 'A Safer Northamptonshire'. Local Government Association guidance encouraged that when the Panel reviewed the Annual Report it should consider whether Northamptonshire had become more safe over the past year. However, the Annual Report did not provide a basis for reaching a conclusion on this question.
- The Annual Report produced by the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) was one example of a PCC taking a more quantitative approach by presenting more data to back up their conclusions. The PFCC was urged to emulate this approach in future.

The PFCC made the following points:

- The presentation of performance information to the Panel was an area of previous discussion and the approach taken continued to evolve.
- In the year ahead he proposed to provide the Panel with a quarterly update on performance that would include appropriate narrative information. This reflected that performance information needed to be properly contextualised when presented in public, for example, to show that an increase in recorded crimes could reflect increased enforcement activity against that type of crime.

The Panel questioned the PFCC on matters relating to his priority of robust enforcement – modern slavery and exploitation. Members made the following points:

- The PFCC was challenged about the robustness of action being taken to address modern slavery in Northamptonshire, a member referring to a case when a perpetrator had been penalised but had then resumed activity.
- It was questioned why the 'Take a Closer Look' film commissioned by the OPFCC to raise awareness of modern slavery and exploitation was only directed at frontline professionals and not also used with members of the public.

The PFCC made the following points:

- The Annual Report was intended to be a strategic overview: he could discuss concerns about specific incidents separately with individual Panel members if they could provide details.
- He was satisfied that the force had sufficient focus on modern slavery, which had not been the case when he had first taken office. The OPFCC had also set up a countywide partnership board on modern slavery and human trafficking, which was chaired by the Director for Delivery.
- A separate film on modern slavery and exploitation designed for members of the public had just been produced.

The Panel questioned the PFCC on matters relating to his priority of robust enforcement – increased accessibility and visibility in all communities. Members made the following points:

- The force's aim to embed its services in local communities was welcome. The force needed to be a trusted source of help to members of the public. It was also important that different public sector organisations worked together as a single team to address complex issues such as knife crime. It was positive to see that this joined up approach was reflected in the Annual Report.
- More robust action should be taken in Northamptonshire in cases where travellers occupied land.
- Visible uniformed policing was backed up a range of functions that were less obvious but essential, such as criminal investigation. Reassurance was sought about the PFCC's confidence in the effectiveness of these functions in the county.
- The PFCC was urged to maximise the use of his Supporting Communities Fund to work with different community groups.
- The PFCC was challenged about whether it was planned to close Weston Favell police station and Moulton fire station. The case for this was questioned as these facilities were located in a growing area that would require some alternative provision.

The PFCC made the following points:

- He had a continuing concern about the service that the national Action Fraud function provided to Northamptonshire. He had requested information from the force about the number of cases being directed to it for investigation, as he was not certain that victims were well-served by the current national approach.
- He agreed that support functions were a crucial element in the overall response to crime. The importance of maximising their effectiveness in Northamptonshire was behind the decisions to withdraw from Multi-Force Shared Services and to introduce the enabling services approach.
- The force had undertaken considerable training on investigative capability in the last three years, which should be reflected in the outcome of its next HMICFRS inspection.

- He was keen to look at all opportunities to use the grant schemes he controlled to work with local groups to address risks to communities. It was open to all groups to bid for funding.
- The existing Weston Favell police station had been valued at approximately £1m but required remedial work on the roof that would cost more than this. There would continue to be a policing base in Weston Favell. Moulton fire station was not being closed: the adjacent headquarters and maintenance facilities were being relocated to Darby House and Earls Barton respectively. He had made these plans known before the election in the interests of openness.

The Panel questioned the PFCC on matters relating to his priority of prevention and early intervention – divert young people from crime. Members made the following points:

- It had been reported in the media that referrals to social care services had increased following the end of lockdown. It was questioned whether Youth Services were seeing similar demand.
- The development of the Youth Commission by the OPFCC was welcome and confirmation was sought about whether this was intended to be a long term project and whether it would be able to engage with young people in disadvantaged areas.

The PFCC advised that the Youth Commission was a long term project and would engage with young people from all areas in the county.

The Director for Early Intervention provided additional information in response to point made by members during the course of discussion as follows:

- The Early Intervention team was currently receiving a higher number of cases but it was not yet possible to say whether this was due to the end of lockdown or other factors, such as new operating arrangements connected with the creation of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust.
- Youth Commission members were appointed through a formal recruitment process that operated every 12 months, which helped to broaden involvement.

The Panel considered potential conclusions on the Annual Report for inclusion in its report to the PFCC. The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that the Annual Report was a finished document that represented the PFCC's views on the progress made towards his outcomes: when reviewing it the Panel was able to comment on the robustness of these conclusions.

Members made the following points during the course of discussion:

- The Annual Report did not provide sufficient clarity about performance against the PFCC's key outcomes.
- The report was a good one and showed examples of positive progress, such as the investment of £1.5m in local crime fighting initiatives, good joint working between the force and NFRS as part of the response to the pandemic and increased numbers of police officers.

- Differing views about the best way for the PFCC to present the Annual Report did not mean that it failed to achieve its purpose.
- The Panel's report to the PFCC on the Annual Report could make reference to comments by individual Panel members as well as setting out the Panel's overall conclusion.

The PFCC commented that the outcome of the recent election represented a judgement on his performance. He believed that the Panel would be satisfied with information on the delivery of Police & Crime Plan outcomes that could be provided to it in the year ahead.

**RESOLVED that: the Panel accepts the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2020/21.**

**9. Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Fire & Rescue Statement for 2020/21**

The PFCC presented the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire & Rescue Authority Fire & Rescue Statement for 2020/21, highlighting the following points:

- The results of previous work to improve the governance of NFRS were now embedded in standard operating arrangements.
- HMICFRS recognised improvements to performance and oversight that had been made in Northamptonshire. This represented tangible progress towards his aim as PFCC to deliver an effective, sustainable Fire & Rescue service.
- He was proud of what had been done in Northamptonshire and the progressive approach taken to achieve it.

The Panel considered the Fire & Rescue Statement and questioned the PFCC on his confidence in the level of assurance it set out, with particular reference to operational assurance. Members made the following points during the course of discussion:

- The first part of the Home Office review into the role of Police & Crime commissioners had let the government to propose to consult on making the PFCC model the standard national approach. This reflected positively on the work done in Northamptonshire and other areas that had already adopted this model.
- The Panel should endorse the Fire & Rescue Statement.
- Community engagement work by NFRS was particularly beneficial and the scope to carry out more activity in schools for this purpose should be considered.
- It was questioned whether smaller community-based fire stations would continue to form part of the service provided by NFRS.
- The Fire & Rescue Statement provided clear information about performance against key community outcome measures.
- A member who had received training in using a defibrillator at Thrapston fire station questioned the potential to extend this offer, for example, by delivering training in schools.
- NFRS personnel were commended on their work, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PFCC made the following additional points during the course of discussion:

- The COVID-19 pandemic had created challenges relating to community engagement activity, although home fire safety checks had continued to be a means of providing information about fire prevention.
- There were no plans to close any existing fire stations in the near future. This position reflected that work carried out in support of the creation of the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire & Rescue Authority had included a strategic review of future service delivery by NFRS. Ideally, he would want to consolidate the fire stations in Rothwell and Desborough and to move Kettering fire station from its current location next to a school. However, resources were not currently available to pursue this.
- The future role of firefighters was the subject of current discussion at national level, including with the relevant trade unions. Services needed to be affordable within the resources provided by the government. Consideration was being given to matters such as fire appliances carrying defibrillators and trauma packs.

The Director for Early Intervention provided additional information in response to point made by members during the course of discussion as follows:

- The OPFCC was currently working with NFRS to enhance its existing fire prevention offer, which would include working with young people.
- The Northamptonshire Emergency Services Cadets scheme still operated. The OPFCC aimed to develop the scheme but this would involve changing the current delivery model to use officers' professional expertise in a targeted way alongside contributions by general volunteers. Resources were available to support the development of the scheme once the approach was confirmed.

**RESOLVED that: the Panel accepts the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Fire & Rescue Statement for 2020/21.**

10. **Police, Fire & Crime Panel Work Programme 2021/22 and operating arrangements**

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

- The Panel should use its first meeting to consider its work programme for the year ahead. The Panel was required to carry out specific statutory tasks but should identify those other matters that it also wished to scrutinise.
- The Panel needed to resume holding its formal meetings in-person following the expiry of legislation permitting remote meetings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Panel was asked to agree the broad approach it wished to take regarding the location of future meetings.
- The Panel was asked to agree to continue its membership of regional and national network bodies that had previously helped to inform its work.

The Panel considered the report. Panel members made the following points concerning its potential work programme:

- The workshop session on the development of the PFCC's precept and budget held in 2020/21 had been useful and should be repeated.
- It would be helpful for the Panel to visit the enabling services base at Darby House.
- It would assist the Panel to carry out a skills audit of its new membership.
- The PFCC was due to produce a new Police & Crime Plan later in 2021. The Panel could seek to comment on what the new Plan might include at an early stage in the development process.
- Pre-decision scrutiny of the Police & Crime Plan would need to reflect the respective remits of the Panel and the PFCC.
- The previous workshop session on the PFCC's precept and budget could provide a model for scrutiny of the draft Police & Crime Plan.
- The Panel should pursue the question of additional remuneration for independent co-opted members, which had been raised at the final meeting in 2020/21.
- The Home Office had recognised in 2012 the principle of a disparity between the remuneration of councillor members and independent co-opted members, which panels could need to address.

The PFCC made the following points during the course of discussion:

- He welcomed input from the Panel to the new Police & Crime Plan. However, when the Panel scrutinised the Plan it should recognise that he had been elected on the basis of commitments that he now needed to deliver.
- The Panel should consider including in its work programme the topic of how Northamptonshire was respond to the outcomes of the Kerslake Report and the Public Inquiry into the Manchester Arena terror attack.
- The OPFCC was able to arrange further opportunities for Panel members to observe force activity relating to the night time economy if desired.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager provided additional information regarding remuneration for Panel members as follows:

- All Panel members could claim expenses for activities connected with their roles according to an agreed Member Expenses Scheme. The question of disparity related to the fact that councillor members also received a basic allowance from their local authority to support them as councillors.
- West Northamptonshire Council had adopted a Scheme of Allowances that included provision for an allowance for independent co-opted Panel members. This provision had been recommended by an Independent Review Panel. Subject to checking some details involved this situation seemed to substantially answer questions on this matter that the Panel would otherwise need to ask.

The Panel considered and confirmed potential items of business listed in the report that it wished to include in its work programme for 2021/22.

The Panel subsequently considered the location for its future formal meetings. Panel members made the following points during the course of discussion:

- The Chair noted that past Panel meetings had generally been held at County Hall and webcast live. The Panel had tried meeting in different locations around the county but the disadvantages of this outweighed the advantages. The Panel should prioritise webcasting its future meetings.
- The safety of participants should be a key factor in choosing venues for future meetings in the current situation.
- The Panel operated on behalf of Northamptonshire residents. They should have the opportunity to attend meetings. The Panel should consider rotating meetings between different locations.
- The Corby Cube offered good facilities and the Panel should consider holding a meeting there.
- It could be more difficult for Panel members to attend meetings held in locations near the edges of the county.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager provided additional information in response to points raised by members during the course of discussion as follows:

- The current Panel meeting had not been webcast as the priority had been to secure a venue that could accommodate the meeting with social distancing measures.
- It would be necessary to investigate whether the webcasting arrangements used for Panel meetings up to March 2020 could be brought back into use. The Panel would also need to take into account the approach that the two Northamptonshire authorities might adopt regarding webcasting meetings.
- The Panel was now legally required to hold its formal meetings in-person but informal activities could still be held remotely.

The Chair invited the Panel to confirm its priorities regarding the location of future meetings.

**RESOLVED that:**

**a) The Panel agrees that its work programme for 2021/22 should include the following matters:**

- **A workshop session open to all Panel members in January 2022 on the development of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's proposed precepts, to include separate sections on Police and Fire & Rescue.**
- **A workshop session open to all Panel members in September 2021 on the 2021/22 Police and Fire & Rescue budget positions.**
- **Two briefing sessions open to all Panel members with the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer on their respective service's priorities and challenges, to take place in venues appropriate to the subject matter**
- **A visit to Darby House for all Panel members**

- **The Joint Independent Audit Committee Annual Report 2020/21**
  - **Police & Crime Plan and Fire & Rescue Plan delivery updates presented to each regular meeting of the Panel**
  - **Police and Fire & Rescue Authority budget updates presented to each regular meeting of the Panel**
  - **Scrutiny of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's updated Police & Crime Plan and Fire & Rescue Plan**
  - **A report on action being taken in Northamptonshire to respond to the outcomes of the Kerlake Report and the Public Inquiry into the Manchester Arena terror attack.**
- b) **The Panel agrees that a skills audit of Panel members be carried out to support its operation.**
- c) **The Panel prioritises the following considerations in relation to the locations to be used for its formal meetings in 2021/22:**
- **The ability to webcast meetings**
  - **A location that is relatively central in Northamptonshire, that is accessible and that offers appropriate parking.**
- d) **The Panel requests that a proposal regarding the future location of its formal meetings be developed for consideration by the Panel.**
- e) **The Panel requests to receive confirmation that remuneration can be paid to independent co-opted Panel members under the West Northamptonshire Council Scheme of Member Allowances.**
- f) **The Panel agrees to continue its membership of the East Midlands Police, & Crime Panels Network for 2021/22.**
- g) **The Panel agrees to continue its membership of the National Association of Police, Fire & Crime Panels for 2021/22.**
11. **Appointments to the Police, Fire & Crime Panel Complaints Sub Committee for 2021/22**

The Chair introduced the report, which invited the Panel to appoint members to the Complaints Sub Committee for 2021/22. The Chair went on to raise the need to change the composition of the Sub Committee, as appointing two councillor members from each of the political groups represented on the Panel was not particularly reflective of its current overall composition.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager provided additional information to the Panel as follows:

- **The appointment of equal numbers of councillor members from different political groups to the Complaints Sub Committee had been intended to make it clear that party politics did not come into its role.**
- **The composition of the Sub Committee had been determined prior to changes in the make-up of the Panel resulting from local government organisation. There**

were now only two Labour councillor members of the Panel compared to four in the past.

- The quorum for a Complaints Sub Committee meeting was three members, which meant that a meeting could proceed without two Labour councillor members needing to be present.

The PFCC advised that the Panel was likely to receive more complaints in future due to the greater role in the police complaints system given to PCCs. He went on to emphasise that the Panel's role concerned complaints about his conduct, whereas issues might be raised that stemmed from other matters such as dissatisfaction with the force.

The Panel considered the report. Councillor McGhee highlighted that that composition of the Complaints Sub Committee might be changed to include one Labour councillor member, with the other as a substitute member, given that two Labour councillors did not need to attend for a meeting to be quorate under the existing arrangements. The Panel went on to consider possible new arrangements for the councillor membership of the Sub Committee.

**RESOLVED that:**

- a) **The Panel agrees to revise the membership of the Complaints Sub Committee to consist of:**
- **3 councillor members from the Conservative councillors on the Panel;**
  - **1 councillor member from the Labour councillors on the Panel, who may be substituted by the other Labour councillor; and**
  - **1 independent co-opted member to be drawn from the pool of all 3 independent co-opted members on the Panel.**
- b) **All councillor members of the Panel be contacted following the current meeting in order to confirm the members who will make up the Complaints Sub Committee in 2021/22.**

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_