

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

A meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel will be held at the Great Hall, The Guildhall, Northampton NN1 1DE on Thursday 8 September 2022 at 1.00pm

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 6 July 2022 (Pages 5 - 12)
b)	Minutes of the Panel meeting held in private on 6 July 2022 (Pages 13 - 14)
c)	Minutes of the Panel meeting held in public on 19 July 2022 (Pages 15 - 28)
SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER	
6.	Joint Independent Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22 (Pages 29 - 46) Guide time: 1.15 – 1.45pm

7.	Police, Fire & Crime Plan Delivery Update (Pages 47 - 98) Guide time: 1.45 – 2.15pm
8.	Outcomes of the HMICFRS 2021/22 inspection of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service (Pages 99 - 150) Guide time: 2.15 – 2.45pm
9.	Use of Automated Number Plate Recognition technology in Northamptonshire [Presentation] Guide time: 2.45 – 3.15pm
10.	Fire & Rescue Authority Budget Update (Pages 151 - 156) Guide time: 3.15 – 3.30pm
11.	Policing Budget Update (Pages 157 - 162) Guide time: 3.30 – 3.45pm
PANEL OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT	
12.	Police, Fire & Crime Panel Work Programme (Pages 163 - 170) Guide time: 3.45 – 4.15pm
13.	Complaints and Conduct Matters Update (Pages 171 - 176) Guide time: 4.15 – 4.30pm
14.	Urgent Business The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.
15.	Exclusion of Press and Public In respect of the following items the Chair 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 Panel 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.”

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
31 August 2022

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Members:

Councillor Gill Mercer (Chair)	Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Adam Brown	Councillor Jon-Paul Carr
Councillor Dorothy Maxwell	Councillor Zoe McGhee
Councillor Russell Roberts	Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor David Smith	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.

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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
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

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, Northampton NN1 1DE on Wednesday 6 July 2022 at 1.00pm.

Present Councillor Gill Mercer (Chair)
 Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Adam Brown
 Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
 Mrs Anita Shields
 Councillor David Smith
 Councillor Winston Strachan

Substitute
 Members: Councillor Philip Irwin
 Councillor Anne Lee
 Councillor Greg Lunn

Also in
 attendance Stephen Mold, Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
 Mark Jones, proposed candidate for appointment as Chief Fire Officer
 of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service
 Deborah Denton, Joint Head of Communications, Office of the Police,
 Fire & Crime Commissioner
 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
 Stuart McCartney, Governance & Accountability Manager, Office of
 the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
 Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer, West Northamptonshire
 Council
 James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, West
 Northamptonshire Council
 Paul Hanson, Democratic Services Manager, West Northamptonshire
 Council

There were also two members of the public in attendance.

61. **Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Carr, McGhee, Pritchard, Roberts and from Miss Woodhouse. Councillor Irwin substituted for Councillor Carr, Councillor Lee substituted for Councillor McGhee and Councillor Lunn substituted for Councillor Pritchard.

62. **Appointment of a Chair**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager invited nominations for a member to chair the current meeting, ahead of the appointment of the Panel Chair and Deputy Chair for 2022/23 at the first regular meeting in the civic year. Councillor Mercer was

proposed and seconded by Councillors Gonzalez De Savage and Lee respectively. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED that: Councillor Gill Mercer be appointed as the Chair of the current Panel meeting.

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

None received.

64. **Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

65. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised the Panel that the regular Panel meeting that had needed to be rescheduled from 23rd June 2022 would be held on 19th July 2022.

66. **Proposed appointment by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire of a Chief Fire Officer**

The Chair welcomed Mr Mark Jones to the meeting and Panel members introduced themselves.

The Chair invited the Democratic Services Assistant Manager to outline the purpose and format of the confirmation hearing as set out in the report provided to the Panel and he highlighted the following points:

- The Panel was required to review and make a report on the proposed appointment of a Chief Fire Officer by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) as one its statutory functions.
- The Panel was required to hold a public confirmation hearing to put questions to the candidate. Guidance recommended that these questions should focus on the areas of the candidate's professional competence and personal independence.
- The confirmation hearing was not intended to repeat the recruitment and selection process carried out by the PFCC to identify the candidate but served more as a safeguard in the overall process.
- The confirmation hearing could result in recommendations by the Panel as to whether the proposed appointment should be made or not or a decision by the Panel to veto the proposed appointment, provided that this was supported by the required two-thirds majority of Panel members. A recommendation not to appoint a candidate or a decision to veto a proposed appointment should not be made lightly.
- The Panel's report resulting from the confirmation hearing would be sent to the PFCC by the end of the next working day and would be published in liaison with the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner.

The Chair invited Panel members to raise any questions regarding the confirmation hearing process. There were none.

The Chair then invited the PFCC to introduce Mr Jones as his proposed appointment to the role of Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) and to comment on the background to the proposed appointment. The PFCC made the following points:

- He was confident that the Panel would be impressed by the knowledge and experience that Mr Jones could bring to the role, which would support NFRS in its continuing improvement journey.
- Since the creation of the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire & Rescue Authority NFRS had received additional investment that had supported improvements in response times and enhanced its vehicle fleet. He was proud of the progress that had been made and paid tribute to the contribution of the outgoing Chief Fire Officer.
- The proposed appointment was the result of a comprehensive and robust recruitment process. This had identified that Mr Jones would be the right person to take forward NFRS and to develop it as an inclusive organisation that was able to embrace change and to make good use of the skills of its staff members.
- Mr Jones was a strong leader with a clear approach that would help to deliver the priorities set out in the PFCC's Police, Fire & Crime Plan.
- Reviewing and reporting on the proposed appointment was a significant responsibility for the Panel. He was sure that the Panel would carry it out with appropriate vigour and robustness.

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

Mr Jones was asked what particularly attracted him to the role of Chief Fire Officer of NFRS, what he saw as its main current challenges and what he would take from his professional experience to enable him to address these challenges effectively. Mr Jones made the following points:

- He had originally not been looking for another chief fire officer position in Britain but had been attracted to the challenges involved in continuing the improvements being made by NFRS. His service history showed that challenging roles held a particular interest for him and that he had record of delivering improvement.
- NFRS faced the challenge that affected all Fire & Rescue services of dealing with the gap between stakeholder expectations and available resources, even though Northamptonshire had benefited from additional investment since the PFCC had become the Fire & Rescue Authority. He had gained considerable experience in previous roles of improving services within financial constraints.
- As Chief Fire Officer he would seek to maximise the funding streams available to NFRS. People also needed to be brought along when there was an agenda for change. Firefighters were generally enthusiastic and receptive to change when

they felt it was being done with them. Members of the public needed to be engaged as well.

Mr Jones was asked how as Chief Fire Officer he would seek to ensure that NFRS continued to improve its performance and progressed towards providing outstanding-rated services for local residents. Mr Jones made the following points:

- His initial task would be to identify where NFRS stood in relation to its aims and ambitions, based on tangible performance measures.
- It would then be necessary to ensure that NFRS had the appropriate mechanisms to deliver performance improvements in future. These would form the basis for reporting to the PFCC that showed evidence of improvement in outcomes and standards. They would also enable the PFCC to hold to account the Chief Fire Officer for the progress being made.
- He would seek to communicate with people when there was a need for NFRS to change to set out the reasons for this and what difference it would make to members of the public.

It was noted that there was a possibility of industrial action in the future connected with the national pay offer for firefighters. Mr Jones was asked how he would seek to manage the impact in Northamptonshire and to maintain continuity of service if this was to occur. Mr Jones made the following points:

- All chief fire officers were required to plan for and manage contingencies that could affect fire cover. He would scrutinise NFRS's existing plans to ensure that they were effective. He would also seek to enhance public safety measures to mitigate the impact of contingencies on the community as far as possible.
- He recognised the legitimate right of firefighters to take industrial action. A short period of action should not have a detrimental effect on public protection.

Mr Jones 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 Jones made the following points:

- Fire & Rescue services generally had some latent capacity as a result of a reduction in acute demand over time.
- He would be keen to look at how NFRS could work with partners, particularly Northamptonshire Police but also others in the public and private sectors, to maximise value for money.
- NFRS should publicise the range of services it provided in order to maximise the wider appreciation of their value. This would help to encourage partners in joint working and possibly also investment.

Mr Jones was asked how as Chief Fire Officer he would seek to ensure that NFRS made good use of opportunities for partnership working, both with the emergency services and with partner organisations in broader areas of activity. Mr Jones made the following points:

- It was necessary to have a clear picture of the partnerships in which NFRS was involved and their respective aims. NFRS should then focus on those partnerships that produced most value.
- NFRS should explore options for further inter-regional partnerships with neighbouring services, particularly to the south, rather than being bound by geographical restrictions.
- The opportunity to improve partnership working with other public and emergency services in particular should be embraced.

Mr Jones was asked to give an example of when he had led a major service transformation project and how he had sought to ensure that it was successful. Mr Jones made the following points:

- He had served as the Director of Strategic Reform for the Australian Capital Territory Emergency Services Agency from 2016 – 2018. The Agency was investing AU\$100ms in a range of projects in areas including workforce diversity, industrial relations and facilities development. However, projects were not being planned effectively enough.
- He had reset these projects based on PRINCE2 methodology and had produced other processes to support effective programme management. He had also coached colleagues to develop as project managers to oversee projects beyond the end of his tenure.
- The success of this approach was demonstrated by the fact that projects were still running well four years on.

It was noted that the Chief Fire Officer and the PFCC must work as a team in the interests of Northamptonshire but do so in a way that recognised that the Chief Fire Officer was responsible for operational leadership of NFRS and was held to account by the PFCC for its effectiveness. Mr Jones was asked how he would seek to maintain the right balance between these different factors in his working relationship with the PFCC. Mr Jones made the following points:

- He was accustomed to reporting to a senior authority, whether that was a minister or a combined fire authority.
- He believed in open dialogue and maintaining a professional relationship, through both regular communication and formal meetings. There should be a clear understanding of the political and operational boundaries between the PFCC's and Chief Fire Officer's respective roles and how any transgressions would be addressed.
- Agreed strategic objectives and priorities would provide a good basis from which to work.
- He recognised that the Panel could also request the Chief Fire Officer to attend meetings to provide information.

Mr Jones was asked how he would communicate with local councils as Chief Fire Officer. Mr Jones made the following points:

- As Chief Fire Officer he would seek to engage regularly with all local elected representatives. He would quickly aim to build a good understanding of the area and of local stakeholders.
- He wanted NFRS to be seen as an organisation with which stakeholders wished to be associated.

It was noted that NFRS served two different local authority areas and Mr Jones was asked whether he would seek to provide an equal level of service in both. Mr Jones made the following points:

- In his latest professional role he was responsible for services covering an area that was larger than France and Germany together.
- It was not possible for a Fire & Rescue service to provide the same service in all parts of an area. However, he would guarantee the minimum standard of service that NFRS would aim to provide throughout Northamptonshire.

It was noted that NFRS should have an organisational culture that engaged and empowered staff members. In this context Mr Jones was asked how as Chief Fire Officer he would handle a dispute with staff members, in order to engage with them and to produce a fair outcome, and was asked how he would respond should such a case involve a court decision. Mr Jones made the following points:

- He was a strong believer in employee rights and was a longstanding union member himself, whilst also recognising the rights of non-union members.
- National and local disputes were relatively rare. If a dispute was within his power to resolve it was usually possible to do so. This would involve working together with the PFCC in cases where resources were involved.
- He believed in employee engagement as standard practice and in sincere consultation. Views would be listened to when they were sought.

Mr Jones was asked what key principles he would seek to apply as the operational leader of NFRS in order to build and maintain confidence and respect in his leadership and in the future direction of the organisation amongst staff members, partners and local residents. Mr Jones made the following points:

- The first key principle was public service and public safety: NFRS personnel were public servants and the organisation existed to support public safety. The safety of NFRS personnel would be his other key principle.
- NFRS should then deliver good value and outcomes and be an accountable organisation. It should treat everybody with dignity and respect: firefighters generally did this readily, which maintained positive perceptions of the profession.
- All chief fire officers were custodians of their respective services and should reflect this in the way they carried out the role. He would also seek to be a strong defender of NFRS where necessary.

Mr Jones was asked what relationship the Chief Fire Officer should have with the Police, Fire & Crime Panel given the respective roles of the Panel and the PFCC. Mr Jones made the following points:

- He recognised that the Panel had the power to request the Chief Fire Officer to attend formal meetings to answer questions. However, he would seek to engage with Panel members whenever this was useful to enable the Panel to be informed about relevant issues.

The Chair invited Mr Jones to raise any questions that he wished to ask the Panel. Mr Jones advised that he had been well-informed about the Panel's role during the recruitment process and thanked members for their time.

67. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

68. **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 I, 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.

69. **Report and recommendation to the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire on the proposed appointment of a 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. On a vote of 9 members in favour and one against it was:

RESOLVED that: the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel recommends that the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner appoints Mr Mark Jones as the Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service.

The meeting closed at 2.15pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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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, Northampton NN1 1DE on Tuesday 19 July 2022 at 10.00am.

Present Councillor Gill Mercer (Chair)
 Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Adam Brown
 Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
 Councillor Zoe McGhee
 Councillor Russell Roberts
 Councillor Ken Pritchard
 Councillor David Smith
 Councillor Winston Strachan

Also in attendance: Stephen Mold, Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
 Darren Dovey, Chief Fire Officer, Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service
 Nicci Marzec, Director for Early Intervention, Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
 Ed Bostock, Democratic Services Officer, West Northamptonshire Council
 James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, West Northamptonshire Council

There was also one member of the public in attendance.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager opened the meeting.

70. **Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Carr and Jelley and from Mrs Shields and Miss Woodhouse.

71. **Appointment of the Panel Chair for 2022/23**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager invited nominations for the Chair of the Panel for 2022/23. 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 2022/23.

72. **Appointment of the Panel Deputy Chair for 2022/23**

The Chair invited nominations for the Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2022/23. Councillor Gonzalez De Savage was proposed and seconded by Councillors Strachan and Smith respectively. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED that: Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Panel for 2022/23.

73. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor McGhee declared in relation to the agenda item on the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2021/22 that she was a funding executive at CSD Activity Camps, which had received grant funding from the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner in 2021/22 as stated in the Annual Report.

74. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair thanked members for their trust in reappointing her to the position, which she hoped to fulfil. The Chair also thanked members for their attendance at the current meeting on an extremely hot day and aimed that the Panel should get through the business on the agenda in good time. The Chair went on to advise that she had circulated a letter from the Chair of the National Association of Police, Fire & Crime Panels commenting on good practice and potential focus areas for panels, which members might find useful.

75. **Minutes**

In response to a query the Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that the draft minutes of the Confirmation Hearing held on 6th July 2022 would be presented to the Panel meeting on 8th September 2022.

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the Police, Fire & Crime Panel meeting held on 14th April 2022 be approved.

76. **Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2021/22**

The Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) presented the Annual Report, outlining work done during 2021/22 and progress towards the delivery of his priorities. The PFCC highlighted the following points:

- Although life was now returning to something like normality after the COVID-19 pandemic it was important not to lose sight of the experience gained during this period.
- His role included supporting innovation that enhanced effectiveness and there had been good examples of this in Northamptonshire during the past year. £2.5 million funding had been secured from the Safer Streets Fund and the government had praised work being done in the county. Northamptonshire was also seen as a hub for innovation in relation to policing and the Fire & Rescue service.
- He was responsible for holding to account the Chief Constable for the effectiveness of Northamptonshire Police and crime data was a key tool for this. However, a properly contextualised view of such performance data needed to be taken, which was why it had not been included in the current Annual Report. He

was confident that the force had made good progress and he proposed to bring a new style of performance report to the Panel in 2022/23.

- He thanked the team in the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) for their work in delivering the activity set out in the Annual Report.

The Panel considered the Annual Report.

A Panel member sought further information about how Safer Streets Funding had been used in Northamptonshire and the practical benefit this had produced. The PFCC made the following points:

- Funding had been used on the Hemmingwell estate in Wellingborough, in Northampton and in other parts of the county for purposes including the provision of CCTV and alleygating, for youth work and to fund the Safer Nights Out (SNO) van operating in Northampton.
- A second SNOvan for the north of the county would be provided if further funding was secured.

A Panel member referred to cases of young children being recruited by gangs to sell drugs and questioned PFCC on what was being done in Northamptonshire to address this, including the potential to do more engagement work in schools. The PFCC made the following points:

- The only way to resolve issues relating to drugs completely was to end drug taking in society: the drugs trade would continue whilst it remained lucrative. In the meantime, a range of work was being done in Northamptonshire on this matter.
- New doors and security measures had been fitted on properties on the Hemmingwell estate in Wellingborough using Safer Streets funding
- Northamptonshire had secured £350,000 additional government investment in police officer recruitment to reflect the progress made in the county.
- The Adverse Childhood Experiences team carried out work to engage with young people about the dangers of getting involved in crime.
- Young people's involvement in crime could be linked to wider factors such as exclusion from education and relevant agencies needed to work together to produce an effective joined up response.
- Engagement activity with young people should take into account that they spent more time with their families and in the local community than in school.

A Panel member noted that the Annual Report referred to various initiatives underway in Northamptonshire directed at improving safety for women and girls, but questioned what assurances that the PFCC had sought about their likely effectiveness. Further information was also sought about local responses to the issue of drink-spiking.

The PFCC made the following points:

- A significant amount of work was being done in Northamptonshire that would improve safety for women and girls. Operation Kayak launched in 2021 was an

example of specific action by Northamptonshire Police against predatory behaviour in the night-time economy, including drink-spiking.

- Other productive local initiatives included the Shout-Up project intended to counter sexual harassment in licensed premises; the Enough is Enough campaign encouraging men to challenge inappropriate behaviour towards women; and the SNOvan, which had received positive feedback from those it had helped.
- These initiatives reflected the commitment to making the night-time economy in Northamptonshire as safe as possible. He also planned an initiative focussed on inappropriate behaviour by boys towards girls, which he had seen examples of when carrying out school visits.

A Panel member emphasised the importance of joint working in supporting community safety, due to the complex nature of the issues that could be involved. Increased investment in social care should form a part of this, to reflect greater risks to vulnerable young people who might be living in a chaotic family environment. The PFCC agreed the importance of effective joint working between relevant organisations, including local authorities and health organisations. The PFCC went on to highlight the importance of effective data-sharing between organisations, which was an issue that was not exciting but was crucial to success.

The Panel considered progress on enhancing visible policing in Northamptonshire. Members made the following points:

- The focus on safety in the night-time economy should not detract from the importance of the daytime economy and the need for more visible policing during the day.
- The PFCC was challenged about whether the recruitment of additional police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) was making a practical difference to visible policing in the county that would be seen by residents.

The PFCC made the following points:

- The amount of police activity during the daytime in Northamptonshire had increased. Information reported to him demonstrated that additional officers were deployed in Northamptonshire and were going out on patrol in the community. He could provide further information on this to the Panel.
- It was necessary to recognise that Northamptonshire Police still only had 1,500 officers to cover the whole of the county.

A Panel member welcomed good work being done in the county but noted that the Annual Report appeared inward-looking. The importance both of engaging with different communities and of learning from good practice relating to policing and community safety in other areas was emphasised. The PFCC made the following points:

- He was sorry if the Annual Report gave the impression of being too inward-looking and challenged that this was actually the case in Northamptonshire.
- Significant attention was given to community engagement by both Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS).

- As PFCC he was willing to consider and learn from good ideas wherever they occurred.

A Panel member questioned whether the PFCC was satisfied with the progress being made regarding disposal of unused properties. It was subsequently also questioned whether there was scope for unused properties to be made available for community use. The PFCC made the following points:

- He would be using an Estates Board meeting later that day to emphasise that the current position with some property disposals was not satisfactory. More progress needed to be made, whilst still getting good value.
- He was willing to consider all ideas regarding the use of properties. However, a former police station building was unlikely to be suitable for community use. Disposing of a high value building was also likely to generate more overall benefit for Northamptonshire residents than making it available for community use at a nominal charge.

A Panel member sought further information about how the PFCC had used his role as Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) to improve the operation of the criminal justice system. The PFCC made the following points:

- He was pleased with the continuing work by the LCJB but there remained more to do.
- Northamptonshire was in a better position than some areas with regard to the backlog in court cases, although this had resulted in one of its judges being transferred to Nottinghamshire to assist with pressures there.
- There were always likely to be demand pressures on the judicial system.

A Panel member questioned that the Annual Report did not include any comparative information on how community safety in Northamptonshire had changed at the end of 2021/22 compared to a year earlier, which would assist a member of the public to understand what progress was being made. The PFCC made the following points:

- This Annual Report did not include crime data due to the risk of this becoming the sole focus of attention, as had been the case when the 2019/20 Annual Report was presented to the Panel.
- It was essential that crime data was viewed in context. Various examples illustrating this could be highlighted.
- Northamptonshire had the third highest monthly increase in crime in the country in April 2022, but over the last 12 months its performance had improved most of all forces in the country. The recent position partly reflected hard work done by the force on crime recording, including the recording of secondary offences.
- Most forces nationally were currently seeing an increase in domestic abuse but there had been an 8% decrease in all domestic abuse crime in Northamptonshire and a 6% decrease in the volume of victims, which was reflected in the number of referrals to the Sunflower Centre. He was concerned that Northamptonshire was an outlier in this way and needed to be satisfied about the reasons for this.

- There had been a recent increase in shoplifting offences in Northamptonshire but this was largely due to a single repeat offender who had been responsible for 40 offences representing 13% of the total number.
- The Panel should be assured that as PFCC he had a good oversight of the force's performance and that performance data was also published on his website.
- Performance improvements by the force over the past year should be recognised and he expected them to be reflected in its next PEEL assessment. However, they should also be seen in the context that the force needed to continue to improve.

Panel members commented that the Annual Report was very focussed on policing and encouraged that more reference be made to Fire & Rescue in future. The PFCC acknowledged this point, whilst also highlighting that Northamptonshire Police was a much larger organisation than NFRS.

A Panel member commented that financial pressures were a key factor that could cause young people to get involved in criminal activity if this seemed to be the only way of making money to support themselves or their family. This issue would get worse if the current cost of living crisis was not addressed. All concerned should push for action on this. The PFCC made the following points:

- Current economic pressures had a wide-ranging impact. He would do all that was possible to make Northamptonshire safer within this environment.
- Evidence on gang-related activity indicated that the majority of it was not financially-driven.

Panel members made the following additional points during the course of discussion:

- It was positive to hear that activity in Northamptonshire was informed by examples of good practice elsewhere.
- The emphasis on early intervention and youth work conveyed in the Annual Report was welcome.
- The Annual Report referred to 375 young people supported by the Target Youth Service reaching their final progress point in the Outcomes Star framework at the end of 2021/22 Quarter 4. It was questioned what percentage this represented of the total number of young people supported.

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

- Victim support services in Northamptonshire were available to victims of historic crimes: there was no time limit on access to support. Voice was also intended to act as a gateway to different services that were available.
- There was a sponsored PCSO programme in Northamptonshire. The beat buses operated by the force were another means of enhancing visible local policing.

The Panel considered potential conclusions on the Annual Report for inclusion in its report to the PFCC.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The Panel emphasises the importance of delivering the objective of increasing visible policing in Northamptonshire.**
- b) **The Panel recommends that the work of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service be given more prominence in future annual reports.**
- c) **The Panel requests to be advised of what percentage of the young people supported by the Targeted Youth Service was represented by the 375 young people who reached their final progress point in the Outcomes Star framework at the end of 2021/22 Quarter 4.**
- d) **The Panel requests that an infographic on the deployment of Northamptonshire Police officers be provided for the next Panel meeting.**

77. Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Fire & Rescue Statement for 2021/22

The Chair welcomed the Chief Fire Officer to the meeting and noted that all concerned would be sorry to see him leave NFRS when he retired later in 2022.

The PFCC presented the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire & Rescue Authority Fire & Rescue Statement for 2021/22, highlighting the following points:

- NFRS had continued to carry out a range of significant work during the past year, whilst dealing with the highest level of staff sickness experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- He was proud of the further progress that had been made on recruitment, the development of the vehicle fleet and facilities.
- The past year had been an anomalous one due to the effect of the pandemic. The overall progress made by NFRS should be reflected in the report from its second inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), which was due to be published in the next week.
- He thanked the Chief Fire Officer for his previous support and leadership of NFRS ahead of his retirement in October 2022.

The Panel considered the Fire & Rescue Statement and asked questions relating to the PFCC's confidence in the level of assurance it set out, with particular reference to operational assurance.

A Panel member sought reassurance that home safety visits (HSVs) were targeted effectively. The Chief Fire Officer provided information to the Panel as follows:

- The NFRS prevention strategy used a prioritised approach. HSVs were focussed on the most vulnerable people and the NFRS Prevention Team provided specialist support, including in response to referrals from partner agencies.
- Firefighters based at fire stations carried out activity focussed on a lower level of risk. NFRS also provided advice and information to enable members of the public to help themselves.

A Panel member noted that average response times had increased in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21 and questioned the reasons for this. The Chief Fire Officer provided information to the Panel as follows:

- The position on response times reflected the end of lockdown but also challenges relating to availability at retained fire stations.
- Response times were better than they had been prior to the creation of the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire & Rescue Authority.
- The current average full response time also reflected that the average response time for fires in Northamptonshire was 9:58 seconds, but response times were higher for road traffic collisions and in rural areas.

A Panel member questioned whether the community outcome measure for staff sickness absence included mental health conditions as well as physical health. The Chief Fire Officer provided information to the Panel as follows:

- The community outcome measure covered all conditions. The end of year position for this measure for 2021/22 was worse than for 2020/21 due to the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Chief Fire Officer considered that NFRS had some of the best wellbeing support provision for firefighters that he had seen in his professional experience and it took the wellbeing of all staff very seriously.

A Panel member raised the need for the Panel to consider the outcomes of the latest HMICFRS inspection of NFRS. The PFCC agreed that it was open to the Panel to question him on this matter, although HMICFRS would determine when the inspection report was published.

A Panel member sought confirmation of when the new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for Northamptonshire would be finalised and whether it had been informed by public consultation. The Chief Fire Officer provided information to the Panel as follows:

- The new full CRMP would be published in the immediate future and had been informed by consultation both with the public and with NFRS staff.
- The CRMP linked to the Vision 25 document that the Chief Fire Officer had published to set out his views on the priorities for NFRS and the challenges it would face up to 2025. The Vision 25 document represented the Chief Fire Officer's professional views and so had not been subject to public consultation.

A Panel member noted that members of the public might not be aware of the range of support that NFRS provided to the other emergency services and questioned to what extent NFRS was remunerated for this part of its role. The Chief Fire Officer provided information to the Panel as follows:

- NFRS received regular requests from the other emergency services to gain entry to properties, as well as for more specialist responses such as support in cases involving bariatric patients.
- Medical co-responding was carried out by retained firefighters on a voluntary basis.

- Additional work was not done at the expense of NFRS's core functions.
- The future role and working arrangements of firefighters were under discussion at national level.
- The Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 specified the core functions of Fire & Rescue authorities and those for which they could charge. However, the 2004 Act defined core functions in relatively narrow terms. There was a view within the sector that Fire & Rescue authorities should be given a statutory role in responding to flooding and carrying out inland water rescue, with the appropriate accompanying resources.

The PFCC noted that the recent Fire & Rescue White Paper included proposals relating to the future functions of Fire & Rescue services and firefighters.

A Panel member asked the Chief Fire Officer to give a view at the end of his tenure about how community safety in Northamptonshire had improved. The Chief Fire Officer made the following points:

- In the period 2016-2019 NFRS had a shrinking budget, fewer officers and aging equipment.
- Since the creation of the Commissioner Fire & Rescue Authority a three-year financial stabilisation plan had been implemented and a capital programme had been developed that was delivering new appliances, which improved the safety of both Northamptonshire residents and NFRS personnel.
- Staff numbers were increasing again and a new headquarters for NFRS had been secured.
- The fact that NFRS had been able to improve performance whilst going through an organisational change was a testament to the work of all those involved.
- The timing of his retirement reflected that NFRS was at the end of a phase in its continuing journey of improvement.

The PFCC endorsed the comments made and highlighted that the Chief Fire Officer was already being asked to provide advice on good practice in other areas following his retirement from NFRS.

A Panel member sought further information about whether pressures on NFRS staffing in the past year had affected the Northamptonshire Emergency Services Cadets scheme. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the scheme had moved over to on-line activity during the pandemic and had been able to do good work in supporting young people at a difficult time.

A Panel member asked the Chief Fire Officer to give a view about whether NFRS had enough effective fire appliances to meet likely future needs in the county. The Chief Fire Officer made the following points:

- NFRS had sufficient appliances but may need to consider whether it had the right mix to meet future demands.

- The range of incidents that Fire & Rescue services were now attending was getting broader, with the addition, for example, of incidents connected with flooding or extreme weather conditions.
- The functions carried out by full-time and retained firefighters in future were being considered at national level.
- NFRS's future planning should involve looking at how to meet changing risks not just whether it had the right number of appliances.
- Ultra-high pressure capability was becoming increasingly available across Northamptonshire. The PFCC had provided resources to enable the specification for new appliances now being ordered for NFRS to include this capability.

The PFCC highlighted that enhancing the availability of ultra-high pressure capability was another example of action that would improve the safety of both members of the public and firefighters in Northamptonshire.

Panel members made the following additional points during the course of discussion:

- The Fire & Rescue service wellbeing support dog introduced by NFRS was an example of the attention given to staff members' wellbeing.
- The Chief Fire Officer was thanked for his service and dedication to Northamptonshire.
- NFRS had come back strongly from the previous difficult period in its history.
- NFRS made a commendable contribution to partnership working in Northamptonshire.

The Panel considered potential conclusions on the Fire & Rescue Statement for inclusion in its report to the PFCC.

RESOLVED that: the Panel commends the continuing progress and achievements reflected in the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Fire & Rescue Statement for 2021/22.

78. **Police, Fire & Crime Panel Work Programme 2022/23 and operating arrangements**

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

- The Panel should use its first regular meeting of the new municipal year to consider its work programme, identifying the topics that the Panel wished to scrutinise in addition to its mandatory tasks.
- The report provided an outline work programme as a basis for discussion. This was modelled on the Panel's previous approach and included some potential topic areas suggested by the previous Panel and by the PFCC.
- The Panel had previously been a member of two relevant partnership bodies: the East Midlands Police & Crime Panels Network and the National Association of Police, Fire & Crime Panels. The Panel should determine whether it wished to renew its membership of these bodies.

- The report also included the link to information about the current public consultation on Fire & Rescue Service reform. Panel members were invited to consider the consultation document outside of the meeting and feed back any points that they wished to be included in a response by the Chair.

The Panel considered the report. The Chair made the following initial points:

- The outline work programme provided a good basis on which to proceed.
- The Panel had previously found the proposed briefing sessions with the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer and the proposed workshop session on the development of the PFCC's proposed precepts to be worthwhile.
- The previous Panel had identified the potential to carry out some more in-depth scrutiny work on early intervention in the county. It was open to the Panel now to consider whether this topic should be included in its work programme.

The Panel considered what further action it should take on the topic of early intervention. Several Panel members encouraged that this topic be pursued and the Chair suggested that a working group might be set up for this purpose, although another member questioned whether it was relevant to the remit of the Panel. In response to questions the Democratic Services Assistant Manager provided additional information as follows:

- 5 – 7 members was generally an appropriate size for a working group.
- It would be important to identify clear aims and outcomes for the proposed work to reflect the remit of the Panel and produce the most value for the time invested in it.
- The working group could meet to draw up a draft scope for the proposed work for final approval by the Panel.

Panel members went on to make the following points relating to the overall work programme:

- Consideration could be given to inviting the Chief Constable to attend Panel meetings more frequently.
- The Panel should take more of an overview of complaints about the conduct of the PFCC.
- The Panel should seek an update on the Fire & Rescue white paper at its meeting in December 2022.
- The Panel should invite the new Chief Fire Officer to attend a meeting 3 – 6 months after he had taken up the post.
- The Panel should request an update on the outcomes resulting from investment in interceptor vehicles in Northamptonshire.
- The Panel should seek an update on the outcomes of the latest HMICRS inspection of NFRS at its next meeting.

The Chair noted that the Panel had previously used briefings more than its formal meetings to engage with the Chief Constable. The Chair also referred to the role of the Complaints Sub Committee in carrying out the Panel's complaints function.

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

- He had suggested that it could be useful for the Panel to receive updates on the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology and the operation of the Independent Custody Visitors scheme (ICV) in Northamptonshire. ANPR had been the subject of local investment. The provision of ICVs was part of the PFCC's statutory responsibilities that might not be widely understood.
- He could arrange for the Panel to receive a briefing on road safety strategy more generally, which could be held at an appropriate location.

The Panel considered whether to continue its involvement in the two partnership bodies identified. In response to a question the Democratic Services Assistant Manager gave the view that membership of the East Midlands Police & Crime Panel did add value to the work of the Panel in return for the £420 cost, which could be met from the Home Office grant funding stream that supported the operation of Police & Crime panels.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The Panel agrees that its work programme for 2022/23 should include the following matters:**
 - **A Police, Fire & Crime Plan delivery update presented to each regular meeting of the Panel**
 - **Police and Fire & Rescue Authority budget updates presented to each regular meeting of the Panel**
 - **A report from the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner on the outcomes of the latest HMICFRS inspection of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service to the Panel meeting on 8th September 2022**
 - **A report from the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner giving an overview of the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology in Northamptonshire to the Panel meeting on 8th September 2022**
 - **A report from the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner giving an overview of the Independent Custody Visitors scheme in Northamptonshire to the Panel meeting on 1st December 2022**
 - **The Joint Independent Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22 to the Panel meeting on 8th September 2022**
 - **Briefing sessions with the Chief Constable and with the Chief Fire Officer on their organisations' operating environment, priorities and challenges at least once during the year**
 - **A workshop session on the development of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's proposed precepts for 2023/24 as in previous years**
- b) **The Panel agrees that its work programme for 2022/23 should include a piece of focussed task and finish work on early intervention activity in Northamptonshire.**

- c) **The Panel agrees that councillors Gonzalez De Savage, Maxwell, McGhee, Mercer and Smith would be included in the membership of a task and finish working group on early intervention.**
- d) **The Panel agrees that Panel members not present at the meeting would be contacted subsequently to identify any additional members interested in being on a task and finish working group on early intervention.**
- e) **The Panel agrees to continue its membership of the East Midlands Police, & Crime Panels Network for 2022/23.**
- f) **The Panel agrees to continue its membership of the National Association of Police, Fire & Crime Panels for 2022/23.**

79. **Appointments to the Police, Fire & Crime Panel Complaints Sub Committee for 2022/23**

The Chair introduced the report, which invited that Panel to agree the appointment of members to serve on the Panel's Complaints Sub Committee for 2022-23.

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

The PFCC offered to provide an update on learning that the OPFCC had taken from complaints about Northamptonshire Police if this was sought by the Panel. He suggested that this might best be done as a briefing session.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The Panel agrees the appointment of the following members to serve on the Complaints Sub Committee for 2022/23:**
 - **Councillors Brown, Maxwell and Pritchard from the Conservative councillor members of the Panel, with Councillor Gonzalez De Savage as a substitute**
 - **Councillor Strachan from the Labour councillor members of the Panel, with Councillor McGhee as a substitute**
 - **Mrs Shields and Miss Woodhouse from the independent co-opted members of the Panel.**
- b) **The Panel agrees to include a briefing session with the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner on learning taken from complaints about Northamptonshire Police in its work programme for 2022/23.**

80. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

8th September 2022

Office of the Northamptonshire Police Fire & Crime Commissioner

Joint Independent Audit Committee - Annual Report 2021-22

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 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 2021/22. 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.

Like the previous year, 2021/22 has continued to be adversely affected by COVID-19, which has exercised the full resources of the County's Police Force, the NHS and all Emergency services.

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 during periods of enforced lockdown. To this list I would like to add Internal Audit and External Audit who have assisted the Committee to fulfil its role.

I pay tribute to colleagues John Beckerleg and Gill Scoular, our outgoing JIAC Chair and Member respectively, who retired earlier this year, having extended their tenure in order to alleviate the pressures caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

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 as corporation soles for both PFCC and NCFRA.

This is the ninth Annual Report of the JIAC and it sets out how the Committee fulfilled its purpose and responsibilities in 2021/22.

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 NCFR) 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 31 March 2022. 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 A.

3. Committee Membership

Membership of the Committee during the financial year was:

Name	Appointment	Qualifications
John Beckerleg (Chair)*	Appointed 1 October 2014*	MA, CIPFA, MBA
Ann Battom	Appointed December 2018	CIPFA, MSc
John Holman	Appointed 23 September 2019	TA MA MRICS
Gill Scoular**	Appointed 1 December 2014*	CIPFA
Edith Watson	Appointed 23 September 2019	MBA

Due to the retirement of 2 members during the year a recruitment process was undertaken to bring the Committee back to its full complement of 5. Consideration was given to the skills required to ensure that the committee is well represented in all areas. Following recruitment Ann Battom was appointed as Chair and Alicia Bruce was successfully appointed as a JIAC member and will commence the role on 1 May 2022. Unfortunately, other candidates were not successful and a further recruitment campaign will start in late 2022.

4. Meetings

The Committee met on 4 occasions during the financial year with the meeting in July 2021 scheduled to review financial, audit and governance performance for 2019/20. Meetings are open to the public with minutes being published on the OPFCC website.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions this year we have been unable to meet in person with the PFCC and CC, however online meetings with them, along with Internal and External Auditors have worked very well, enabling our full programme of work to be concluded safely.

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 OPFCC website and in Appendix A.

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

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.

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 reviewed at every meeting.

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

Name	Attendance / Possible attendance
John Beckerleg (Chair)	2/2 (attended December to say goodbye)
Ann Battom	4/4
John Holman	4/4
Gill Scoular	3/3
Edith Watson	4/4

The Committee's meetings have been well supported by officers from the Force, OPFCC and the FRS. The improved quality and timeliness of reports has been maintained. 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 and 2020/21).
- 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) to the new in-house Police (and in 2023 Fire) systems.
- Enabling Services Update.
- Update on MINT.
- Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan update and timetable.
- Corruption and fraud controls and processes.
- Future Internal and External Audit Arrangements.
- Corporate Governance Framework Updates.
- JIAC Recruitment.

The following workshops were held:

- (February 2021 - Fire ICT)

Furthermore, three workshops were held during the year, which considered the following areas:

- September 2021 - Fire Accounts; and
- September 2021 - Police Accounts.
- February 2022 – Estates Workshop

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

The Committee continues to gain significant assurance from both the reports and officers. There are some areas where there are concerns which 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.

6. 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 2021/22 are set out in Appendix B. Five of the six objectives have been completed. The final objective – a self-assessment of JIAC is due to

be concluded by August 2022. The Committee continues to invite constructive criticism from officers and auditors to help it improve the contribution it makes.

Appendix C sets out the objectives for 2022/23. There are some key areas which the Committee will keep under review including support services and statutory accounts. The agreed work programme covers all core areas and increasingly reports now cover both Force and NCFRA in a single document. This has reduced pressure on the agenda for meetings, which gives the Committee space to explore other governance topics; these will be discussed with officers.

7. Identification of key issues

During 2021/22 the Committee considered a range of topics and issues including:

Annual Accounts 2020/21– the deadline to complete the closure of the Annual Accounts was once again missed due to the lack of resources of external auditors Ernst Young. All Finance staff worked hard to ensure that the proposed audit timetable was met and are understandably disappointed by the continuing delays which impact on their 2022/23 work such as budget setting.

Strong representation has been made by the JIAC to the PSAA, who manage the external audit contract, but this has not proved fruitful in improving the situation. Given the delays the JIAC has called into question the usefulness and value for money of the reports when they are finally published, given the changing nature of the current environment in which the PFCC and CC operate.

Whilst Northamptonshire is not alone in this predicament it is a continuing source of concern that must improve and will be closely monitored and reported upon. JIAC reviewed the draft accounts at a workshop in September 2021. These contained the required annual governance statements, which provide the committee with assurance.

The committee expected to formally consider the Annual Accounts at its September 2022 meeting alongside the External Auditor's report as per the planned timetable, however given the continued delay in auditor availability this deadline will be missed.

Enabling Services - with the cessation of all policing partners involvement in the Multi Force Shared Service (MFSS) as of 31st March 2022 there are a number of work streams in place which will provide those services previously delivered by MFSS for policing and which in April 2023 will include Fire.

Referred to overall as 'Enabling Services' the JIAC have required and received, regular updates on progress and associated risks during the year. This has been a sensitive and critical area as work streams include payroll provision, which is now provided by police as a shared service. Whilst the establishment of Enabling Services has been challenging it has provided an opportunity in some areas to deliver joint solutions for police and fire, which is hugely beneficial in terms of systems, cultural integration and working relationships between the organisations.

The JIAC have sort assurance in terms of the use of appropriate skilled project management as well as the risk of optimism bias in the reporting of progress and have highlighted the need for a benefits realisation exercise be undertaken on completion of the implementation of new services. This will be an area that the JIAC will continue to focus on in 2022/23.

Estates programme - the Committee had an in-depth workshop on Estates which covered the current position, future planning and aspirations. Discussions on the length of planning horizons and the financial considerations in relation to the capital programme were informative. It was noted that whilst Fire have made good progress in the provision of a capital budget.

Concerns were expressed by members that there was no longer term plan for investment in built assets, ideally one with a timeframe up to 20 years, which may affect the long-term viability of the Estates strategy Officers shared this concern and agreed that this timeframe would be worked towards.

Risk management – The risk management processes are well established and the joint risk register is regularly monitored (including by the JIAC). The pandemic, recent major cyber security attacks in Northamptonshire and the national shortage of experienced IT staff have added new risks to the register or increased existing risks. Officers, notably the DCC 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 workings, which supported the plan.

Procurement arrangements – The Committee received a report on the changes to the delivery of procurement services, which have been taken in-house jointly for Police and Fire. This results from the decision to terminate the MINT LLP taken in October 2021. The JIAC noted the shorter than expected operational life of the MINT partnership and were assured that the risk of possible termination had been assessed and benefits are expected to be realised as predicted.

Governance framework – The JIAC considered and supported the Internal Audit plans for the year in June 2021 and progress in delivering that plan so far, has been good, especially given the challenges the pandemic has placed on the logistics of undertaking internal audit work. Progress reports on the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations are reviewed at JIAC meetings to ensure that actions are completed in a timely fashion.

Taking all the above into account the JIAC is of the view that, although further action needs to be taken in certain areas, there is a broadly effective governance and control regime in place within the Office of the PFCC, NCFRA and the Force.

Specifically, the JIAC believe that the current arrangements for internal audit remain constructive and effective. Significant improvements are still required in the delivery of the external audit service by Ernst Young in 2022-23 and going forward to ensure a timely completion of the external audit of the financial statements. The JIAC continues to give this matter close attention.

8. Assessment of Internal Audit

PFCC and CC

Mazars were appointed as the internal auditor for four years with effect from 1 April 2015 following a competitive tendering process involving neighbouring Counties. Chief Finance Officers across the region have extended the contract with Mazars to April 2023. The internal audit service will be re-tendered in 2022/23 by Derbyshire on behalf of the region.

The internal audit plan for 2021/22 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. During 2021/22 the Committee has been pleased to see that the number of uncompleted actions has been reduced.

NFRA

The internal audit of NFRA (and NFRS) was undertaken by Milton Keynes Internal Audit Service for 2021/22.

The internal audit plan for NFRA was approved at the June 2021 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.

9. 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 have once again joined the national consortium for the next tender process.

Locally the external audit team has been thorough and engagement has remained positive and constructive, however the delivery of the audit work including timing, structure, planning and fees have continued to be below expectations which remains a significant cause of concern to the Committee.

10. Looking forward

Appendix C sets out the draft Aims and Priorities for the Committee for 2022/23

These reflect:

- Any outstanding recommendations from 2021/22
- 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 PCC, 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 2021/22

Aims and Objectives
<p>Undertake a review of the effectiveness of JIAC (Continued from 2020/21)</p> <p><i>A survey has been undertaken and the results will be presented to the September 2021 meeting of the JIAC. There is some useful feedback which can be considered but a common concern is the breadth of the Committee's work which is affecting the ability to consider items fully.</i></p>
<p>Continue to place importance on the prompt production and audit of the organisations' statutory accounts</p>
<p>Review the implementation of the Enabling Services programme for adapting the full range of support services including, where appropriate, the integration of functions across Police and Fire services. Identify the benefits which have arisen from the closer governance arrangements.</p>
<p>Support the work to determine the approach to future tendering for external services</p>
<p>Initiate up to 3 reviews in areas of strategic importance in the governance of the organisations. [Note: possible areas – approach to climate change, estates, HR policies, workforce planning (in relation to achieving strategic objectives), post Covid changes, use of digital technology, regional working, decision making, equality and diversity, wellbeing.</p>

The Joint Independent Audit Committee’s – Draft 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.

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Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel

8th September 2022

Office of the Northamptonshire Police Fire & Crime Commissioner

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PLAN UPDATE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report updates the Panel on the work of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commission and the progress being made in relation to the delivery of the Police, Fire and Crime Plan for Northamptonshire which is set out in detail in appendix 1. I have also included the quarterly force performance data I publish on my website for the panel's information as appendix 2.

2. Delivering the Police, Fire and Crime Plan

2.1 "Prevention That Keeps the County Safe"

2.2 Safer Streets project concluded in Hemmingwell

Work has concluded on a scheme to improve safety for residents in the Hemmingwell estate of Wellingborough. The OPFCC successfully bid for more than £400,000 last year in the second round of Safer Streets funding by the Home Office – and began works in enhancing security in the area in autumn 2021. Further detail can be found in appendix 1.

- 2.3 The work in Hemmingwell has been taking place over a number of months, and it's very satisfying to see everything now finished and up and running. I want to ensure that every resident in Northamptonshire can feel safe in their home. When I've visited Hemmingwell it's been great to speak to residents, who have told me that they're so glad that the estate has been invested in. The Hemmingwell project followed closely on the heels of the first round of Safer Streets funding, which saw £1.4 million invested across three projects in the county. In Kettering and Wellingborough, a number of alley gates were erected to cut back on anti-social behaviour and prevent them from becoming fly-tipping hotspots, while CCTV coverage was also significantly enhanced with new cameras in both town centres. And the Bouverie estate of Northampton benefitted from new safe bike parking and residential car parks.

- 2.4 We've now invested more than £2 million of Safer Streets funding in Northamptonshire in the last two years, and it's made a real difference for the communities that have received it. A brief update on the work we have delivered can be viewed on our YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0idw8WTHdPU&t=4s>

2.5 Another successful bid for Safer Streets funding

2.6 The OPFCC been awarded almost £1.2 million from the Home Office following the success of two bids to the Government's Safer Streets Funds. To this money, I have pledged additional funding so that almost £1.7 million will now be used on projects to improve the safety of women at night in Northampton and Kettering – including the creation of a Night Safety Charter – and to prevent crime on the Queensway estate in Wellingborough. This the brings the number of grants from the safer streets fund to six since Jan 2020, plus an additional grant from the Safer Women at Night Fund. We have also supported three successful bids led by both North and West Northamptonshire Councils bringing an additional £3.3 million that has been invested in schemes to keep the county safe. The work to be carried out includes:

2.7 Night-time economy in Northampton and Kettering:

Schemes in Northampton and Kettering will enhance the safety of women and girls at night with more than £450,000 of funding. Work will include the creation of a night safety charter; improvements to increase safety of pedestrians as they move about on a night out in Bridge Street, Northampton; lighting improvements and alley gating; an app to help map areas where people don't feel safe, so that they can be improved. There will also be significant investment in ID scan technology that will let around 30 venues in the County share information about people who behave inappropriately or dangerously, which will improve security for pubs and clubs that open past 1am. And a ground-breaking partnership will see "Stand by Her" training rolled out to young men in education to help them understand the impact of harassing behaviour on women and give them the skills to challenge safely and offer support.

This work will build on the schemes put in place earlier this year in Northampton and will see the continued development of the Shout Up harassment training for bar staff, the Licensing SAVI scheme to create a benchmark for security in licensed premises and the It Only Takes One campaign to continue a conversation that encourages bystanders to challenge inappropriate behaviour and starts a conversation about respect. The OPFCC will also supply a second SNOvan – Safer Nights Out Van – to be used by volunteers in the north of the county to support anyone to finds themselves vulnerable on a night out.

2.8 Queensway, Wellingborough

2.9 Around 650 properties in Kiln Way and Minerva Way will have new, secure doors fitted in a partnership with Greatwell Homes, and alleys in the Shelley Road area will be gated. Security lighting will be fitted to some properties and there will be a significant roll out of security products to residents. There will be a major extension of North Northamptonshire Council's CCTV scheme with up to 18 new cameras on the Queensway estate. Car parks will be made more secure and brought to the Park Mark standard and activity schemes will be provided for young people. All the proposals were developed based on crime rates in the areas to be targeted and following consultation with residents and other stakeholders. Work will begin as soon as possible. North Northamptonshire Council is supporting my office with public consultations relating to alley gating schemes and CCTV proposals and we are jointly running a series of engagement events with the local community at Glamis Hall in Wellingborough.

2.10 I am thrilled that the bids we have put forward for additional funding to tackle crime in Northamptonshire have yet again been successful. This money will be used on

practical measures to tackle crime and make people safer and will focus on the priorities that local people have told us they want to see dealt with. We'll be working in partnership with other agencies and with local communities to make Northamptonshire safer. I'm pleased to have been able to bring more money to the county to do this and to have the opportunity to do even more to directly protect local communities and to focus on preventing crime.

2.11 **Helping the elderly and vulnerable avoid doorstep crime and fraud offences**

Operation REPEAT is a scheme that is training health and social care workers from across the county to recognise doorstep crime and fraud offences, has reached more than 200 care professionals, thanks to funding from the OPFCC. The scheme, which launched in Northamptonshire in September 2021, is the only scheme in the country to offer doorstep crime prevention training and is already having a huge impact in Northamptonshire, as more health and social care professionals recognise and report incidents to the police.

Rogue traders, unscrupulous salespeople, distraction burglars and bogus callers are some of the professional criminals that target elderly and vulnerable people. The training sessions being delivered by Operation REPEAT, which stands for Reinforcing Elderly Persons Education at all Times, aims to arm attendees with the knowledge to recognise when fraud is happening, understand the chain of criminality and how details are shared in the criminal world, know what lengths the fraudsters will go to exploit vulnerable people, as well as how to report criminal incidents.

Numerous offences have already been reported and prevented following these training sessions. Within three days of attending an Operation REPEAT session a carer was able to recognise an attempted courier fraud whilst visiting a client and was able to intervene and cut off the call.

A romance fraud was also averted by a 61-year-old woman, who had lost her husband a few years earlier. She met someone on social media purporting to be an Officer from the United States Army and became emotionally attached to him. Following several months of contact, the woman started to become suspicious as the conversation turned to money and after hearing about romance fraud, she stopped contact.

Fraudsters use psychological tactics, befriending and grooming to gain trust and then persuade the victim to part with their money or valuables. As trusted members of the community, health and social care workers can warn and support the elderly or vulnerable people in their care and help them avoid falling for these scams.

I was delighted to attend a recent training session in Moulton to see for myself how impactful this project is. The principle of using trusted members of the community to continually reinforce fraud prevention messages on a weekly or daily basis is a really effective way to reach the most vulnerable people in our county. We want this training to provide the existing community workforce with the knowledge and confidence to spot and speak out to help us break and disrupt this type of crime. We cannot rely on justice alone; we need to intervene early to protect older and more vulnerable people from these fraudsters. Further details can be watched on our YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghh1XU0Ymnk&t=62s>

The initial rollout of these training sessions proved so popular that additional ones are now planned over the next 2-year period and have secured additional match funding investment from CADENT gas.

2.12 “Effective & Efficient Response”

2.13 Emergency Cover Review

Work is ongoing in relation to the Emergency Cover Review of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, which will outline options as to how the service will be resourced, in terms of emergency response with associated benefits to Prevention and Protection, to current and future risk and for the service. It is envisaged that we will receive recommendations by 1st October 2022 with a view to implementation during 2023. The Emergency Cover Review involves a detailed study of activity levels, which informs our risk-based approach to providing the most appropriate response to emergencies in Northamptonshire. The progress of this review and the timescale is reviewed on a regular basis at the Accountability Board meeting and I will agree any formal revision to that date as part of those discussions. I will also require monthly updates on progress. So far, the Terms of Reference have been consulted on with comments accepted and the Project documentation has been shared with the OPFCC which set out in detail the timeline and key deliverables and will be regularly updated and reported on.

2.14 Tackling violence against women

A partnership led by Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and West Northamptonshire Council, with Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Rape Crisis and Northampton BID, has come together to create a network of measures to make women safer at night by improving physical safety and security, tackling perpetrators and starting a conversation that helps people call-out abuse. The programme of work carried out has included measures to make licensed venues safer and a ground-breaking programme to train venue staff to recognise and tackle predatory behaviour.

In December 2021, the OPFCC worked in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council, to secure funding from the Home Office’s Safer Women at Night Fund. This is helping to reduce crime and make communities safer – in particular for women and girls – in and around The Racecourse and Becket’s Park in Northampton.

Central to the programme is a new communications campaign that will raise awareness of all forms of harassment and violence against women and highlight that it only takes one person to say enough is enough to challenge the attitudes and inappropriate behaviours of some men. The OPFCC and West Northamptonshire Council together were awarded more than £800,000 in Home Office funding to invest in the safety of women in the night-time economy.

The programme of work was developed in consultation with groups representing women and local communities, and has included:

- £180,000 investment for new, monitored CCTV and further investment for help points on the Racecourse, Becket’s Park, All Saints Plaza and Abington

Street in a first for Northampton. These allow someone to buzz for help and speak instantly to CCTV operators, while the camera zooms in on their location

- Funding to bring the Shout Up! programme to Northampton, to train and accredit bar staff in identifying and challenging harassing behaviour in their premises
- ANPR cameras and other safety improvements in the Racecourse car park and a well-lit and signed safer walking route across Becket's Park to the town centre
- Funding for licensed premises to take part in the Licensing Safety and Vulnerability Initiative (LSavi) so that they can reassure their customers they take security seriously
- Support for a special police operation that is targeting perpetrators who prey on women in the night-time economy

What makes our campaign unique is that partners have truly acknowledged that women's safety is everyone's responsibility and committed themselves to making a change and start a conversation about respect for women." A brief video setting out this work can be viewed on our YouTube page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufBvkDNolMQ&t=134s>

Information and support can be found at www.itonlytakesone.org.uk

2.15 "Protect & Support Those Who Are Vulnerable"

2.16 Domestic Abuse Support

The Early Intervention Family Support team have been working with the Force to support families impacted by domestic abuse. The team of five practitioners contact victims where children have been present at the incident. They offer advice and guidance, particularly around safety planning and the laws in place to support victims and their families. The team complete assessments and refer to specialist domestic abuse services, sometimes the team have to refer the family to social care. The team are supporting families who previously would not receive support from the Force as the incident has been assessed as low risk.

Since January the project has received 428 referrals which led 342 families being contacted and supported. There were 86 referrals the team were unable to contact but appropriate and proportionate information was shared with partners such as Health or Education to ensure the children impacted were monitored for their wellbeing. Families contacted, are offered the opportunity to attend online workshops looking at types of abuse, impact on children and services available to support. 10 workshops have been delivered with 32 parents attending in total. There is further collaborative work with the Force sharing with Officers the journey of the Public Protection Notification (PPN) and the importance of obtaining correct contact numbers so the families can be contacted and offered support.

2.17 Demand for Support

In June and July 8 presentations were delivered to health colleagues from the 0-19 teams, GP Safeguarding Forums, GP practices and Acute Services. These presentations have resulted in direct referrals to the team from health professionals. The team have also been working closely with schools to promote the support offered at Tier 2.6 ACE training sessions have been delivered in schools with more booked for the start of the

Autumn term. It is hoped this input from the team will clarify to professionals if we would be the best service for the family.

The demand for Tier 2 support in the county is growing. The team have increased by a further 4 Practitioners since January and there will be further recruitment this year. Since January, the Early Intervention/ACE Family Support Practitioners have worked with 190 families. The team are seeing an increase in the number of children and young people experiencing difficulties managing their mental wellbeing and parents concerned about their ability to manage their children's behaviour. There have been a number of referrals for help with unsuitable housing and financial issues. These areas of concern are expected to increase over the next few months as families have to budget for higher fuel and food costs.

The Early Intervention/ACE Support team changed the way they receive referrals for family support. Now established within the county, the Early Intervention Service now has its own direct referral system, receiving referrals from GPs, Health Visitors and Hospital teams. Schools are making the highest number of referrals.

All professionals making a referral to the Early Intervention/ACE Support Service receive the following:

- Confirmation email, detailing the name of the practitioner who will be supporting the family referred.
- Decline email, detailing the reason for the decline and advice and guidance on possible alternatives for the referrer to consider.

Where referrals have not contained comprehensive or clear information, the Senior team have contacted the Referrer and obtained clarification or have given feedback on the standard of referral.

2.18 Feedback Received

The Early Intervention Service has been seeking feedback for the interventions delivered. Feedback has been sought from families and from the professionals who have referred to the Service.

Feedback for ACE Support and Interventions

Between Jan 22 –July 22, 52 families provided feedback:

- Satisfied with the support received - 47 Families scored us between 9-10 (score range 0 to 10)
- Would you change anything about the service received – 48 answered 'No'
- Would your situation have improved without our support – 38 answered 'No'

6-month feedback

The Early Intervention/ACE service are now in a position to revisit families 6 months after support has ended. Feedback received from the 20 families who received support 6 months previously, 60% said they had sustained positive change for their families with the support from the Early Intervention Team. Contacting the family gives a further opportunity to offer further support or refer to a specialist agency.

Partnership Agency Feedback

In May 22 the team invited feedback from Partnerships Agencies who had contact with the Early Intervention/ACE team. 7 responses have been received.

- Communication with the OPFCC Early Intervention Team – 100% rated us Excellent
- Quality of the Service – 100% rated us Excellent
- Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Provided – 100% rated us Excellent
- Referral Process – 86% rated us Excellent 14% rated us Very Good

2.19 Tackling the root causes of knife crime

The Early Intervention Service has two EI/ACE Practitioners working alongside Neighbourhood Policing teams and the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) programme. This year they helped to deliver knife crime interventions to Secondary School students (11 to 15 years) across the county. This educational intervention demonstrates the dangers of carry a knife with onsite support to any students concerned for their safety from the EI/ACE Practitioners.

The following schools have received a knife intervention, totalling over 4,000 children.

- Rushden Academy
- Northampton School for Boys
- Abbeyfields
- Northampton Academy
- Thomas Becket
- Malcolm Arnold Academy
- Weston Favell Academy
- CE Academy
- Duston School

There are more interventions planned in September to schools and Academies in East Northants. The team also supported an external drama group who delivered an alternative Knife Crime Intervention to Schools in Corby and Kettering and there are plans to continue this support to Schools in Wellingborough.

2.20 The Knife Angel

The Knife Angel, a national monument against violence and aggression made from 100,000 knives recently visited Northamptonshire thanks to funding from the OPFCC in partnership with local charity C2C Social Action, West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council. The Knife Angel heralded the launch of a month of activities across the county aimed at raising awareness and educating primarily young people on the impact of knife and violent crime.

We know that knife crime causes fear and anxiety, and my hope is that the Knife Angel will spark conversations, increase engagement and raise awareness of the consequences that knife and violent crime have on communities and in particular to young people. I have pledged to use early intervention and prevention initiatives to tackle the root causes of knife crime in Northamptonshire.

The Knife Angel is made from 100,000 blunted blades handed in to more than 200 knife amnesty bins and police forces across the country, including Northamptonshire Police. The artwork, created by Alfie Bradley at the British Ironworks Centre at

Oswestry in Shropshire, features messages from families of victims of knife crime engraved on the sculpture's wings.

2.21 More bleed cabinets rolled out across Northamptonshire

Seventeen new bleed control cabinets containing lifesaving equipment are being installed across the county by Off the Streets NN, with the support of funding from the OPFCC. The cabinets contain medical items that are used to stop catastrophic bleeding and keep someone alive until the emergency services arrive. The cabinets are being fixed outdoors in high profile locations including in Northampton's Racecourse, Eastfield Park – Wellingborough, the Recreation Ground in Kettering and at Adrenaline Alley in Corby.

In addition, 30 bleed control kits – trauma packs that are like first aid kits but contain specialist items that are used to stop serious bleeding – will be put into shops and stores that will be identified by a window sticker. These new kits and cabinets join more than 50 others already installed by campaigning organisation Off the Streets NN and are funded through a grant of £10,000 by the OPFCC.

Off the Streets NN set up the scheme to tackle knife and gang-related crime through a partnership approach, involving community bodies ranging from educational establishments to faith-based organisations and voluntary agencies. I am full of admiration for Off the Streets NN, and so proud to be able to support them. They are showing incredible commitment to making Northamptonshire safer and are a great example of a community coming together and taking action to tackle a major cause of community concern. These new bleed cabinets will complement the investment I made at the end of 2018 when I funded trauma response kits for every police response vehicle in Northamptonshire, alongside training for every frontline police officer in dealing with major traumatic injuries.

2.22 Working with our Young People

The OPFCC Youth Team have delivered group work and one to one interventions to young people across the county. These services are in high demand with 129 young people (10 to 15 years) receiving educational input in groups on healthy and unhealthy relationships, knife crime and exploitation. 105 young people received one to one intervention with a Youth Worker covering issues on anger management, self-harm and exploitation. The team are working alongside schools and other professionals to share information on children and young people who may be vulnerable to exploitation and have formalised a process across the county. These Contextual Safeguarding meetings have resulted in the earlier identification of children and young people to risk and harm and a supportive and established professional network who understand the issues facing the areas of the county they work.

The Youth Service is dynamic in its response to county issues and increased their presence in the Sixfields area, Northampton in response to anti-social behaviour by young people. In addition, the team offered training sessions to staff at the Sixfields cinema complex on issues such as child criminal exploitation, conflict management and knife crime.

Members of the Youth team have also been working alongside the Arson Task Force to deliver educational input around the risks of fire setting. The Youth team continued this input delivering the fire safety message to children they met in their own

communities in Rushden, Wellingborough, Corby, Kettering and Daventry. Further details can be found in appendix 1.

2.23 Summer activities will help build relations between police officers and young people

A host of summer activities were held to build relationships between local police officers and young children who are at risk of exploitation – as well as delivering key life and safety messages to them. The programme of events took place over a five-week period in Corby, Wellingborough, Kettering, Rushden and Daventry, and include BBQs, football sessions and big board game challenges. The sessions were delivered by the Youth Service of the Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC), and were designed specifically to engage with young people in the community who may be at risk of becoming involved in gangs, adopting anti-social behaviour or to vulnerable young people being exploited.

The first week of the programme saw young people take part in party escape rooms, where they were set a series of challenges that addressed issues and raised awareness on keeping safe, alcohol, drugs, consent and safe relationships.

The second week included a big board game challenge educating participants on stop and search procedures by the police, as well as splash sessions teaching them valuable water safety lessons, while the third week's activities focused on learning about emotional wellbeing and protective behaviours. The final two weeks also included 'Saved by the Bell' sessions which addressed hate crimes, while 'Back of the Net' drills and a football match against police staff followed by a BBQ will helped to build positive relationships between young people and the police.

We need to do as much as we can to protect young people in Northamptonshire, which is why I have significantly invested in this area. The Youth Service in my department has worked with more than 4,000 children and young people since it was established, and I am sure this programme of events will prove very valuable in educating them and helping to prevent them from becoming involved in or becoming victims of crime.

2.24 “Effective Justice”

2.25 Local Criminal Justice Board

Since March 2020, the Local Criminal Justice Board which I chair continues to bring key criminal justice agencies together. The focus has now moved away from the drawing up of a coordinated response to the COVID pandemic, onto wider cross agency performance challenges such as improving conviction rates and reducing the time it takes to prosecute defendants for adult rape offences. This year I have continued to make a substantial investment in supporting the Integrated Offender Management scheme in Northampton. This is a multi-agency project involving the Force, Probation, The Third Sector, and both Local Authorities. The aim of this scheme is to offer support to those prolific offenders who wish to change whilst tightly monitoring and 'gripping' those who do not. I am pleased that the scheme has attracted significant partnership support. My team and I are engaging with the Director and other senior staff at HMP Five Wells in Wellingborough, which has been steadily building up its allocation of prisoners.

2.26 Tackle substance misuse

A further £240,000 has been allocated towards Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Services this year. These funds are pooled with the Local Authority treatment budget which is administered by North Northamptonshire council on behalf of the whole county. In addition, Northamptonshire has been awarded additional Home Office Grant funding to tackle substance misuse amongst our local homeless population. Probation have also received a funding uplift and now contribute to the funding of substance misuse treatment. The OPFCC, NNC, Social care, and Probation are conducting a comprehensive joint needs assessment of treatment services in the County this year, as a precursor to a wholesale recommissioning treatment services in 2023.

Over a number of years, the OPFCC has been instrumental in commissioning a range of out of court disposals (OOCs) for low level offenders, ensuring that appropriate offenders can be conditionally cautioned to attend a rehabilitative programme, for example for domestic abuse offending, drug or alcohol offending and a special programme for female offenders. This range of conditional cautions has helped the Force to be well placed for the national implementation a two tier OOC system.

2.27 Addressing mental health issues

Northants was a test bed site for Mental Health Treatment Requirements, and the work undertaken here has gone on to shape national thinking on how best to deliver mental health (and subsequently other) treatment as part of a court order. I continue to provide additional funding for this scheme and early evaluations of this work have identified very significant positive outcomes. I plan to provide additional investment this year in Op Alloy which will see mental health nurses continue to work closely with the Force, providing advice and support both in the Force Control Room and in Response vehicles. This has doubled the service capacity and extends the service to 3am. As a result, the quality and appropriateness of our response to those with mental health needs is improved.

2.28 “Modern Services That Are Fit for Purpose”

2.29 A strong and inclusive Fire & Rescue Service

Work is being undertaken throughout the service to demonstrate positive activity to promote a strong and inclusive organisation which allows staff at all levels to develop and grow their potential. The Service 2021 – 2025 ‘Culture and People Strategy’ is now in place to deliver on the requirements of this objective via three of its five themes:

- Future proof
- Resilient Leadership
- Empowered, engaged and accountable.

2.30 The draft strategy, plans, action plans and target dates including performance measures that fall out of this strategy are under review in anticipation of feedback from HMICFRS and any areas of improvement from the EDI Survey hosted by Nelson Training. The workforce development team are also progressing an effective Leadership programme alongside new talent and promotion processes; actions underway within that programme are as follows:

- Consult and implement the Leadership Fire Standard.

- Deliver Leadership CPD programme to leaders at all levels based on business priorities as determined.
- Deliver management business skills CPD programme.
- Further explore and integrate Leadership delivery in conjunction with Police via shared resource's including Enabling Services.
- Deliver talent management plan to ensure all staff have opportunities to develop, progress and/or be the best they can be in current role.
- Integration talent management processes with Police and Enabling Services.
- Continue to monitor improved promotion processes in line with the Workforce plan.
- Continue to update and improve development programmes for all operational roles and introduce NFCC Supervisory Managers development programme.
- Implement a process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

2.31 Working Closer Together

Closer collaboration between Police and Fire & Rescue is central to my Police, Fire and Crime Plan and I continue to work closely with both the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to further explore, enhance and deliver their joint operational activity and ambition.

A new strategic board has been established between Police, Fire and Rescue and the OPFCC which will meet monthly to ensure progress is effectively tracked. This will also include providing oversight of the 'Working together measures' within the Police Fire and Crime Plan.

To date, four key priority areas have been agreed, including:

- The development of a multi-service officer role
- Community Safety/ prevention
- Cadets and Volunteers
- JOT - centre of excellence

Each work stream has appointed named leads from each organisation, who are now scoping out how these areas can be developed in line with the strategic intent within the Police, Fire and Crime Plan and a joint briefing document has been produced to capture the current interoperability work, to highlight what is already embedded as business as usual and to outline the ongoing focus of the group. In addition to this, work is continuing to identify the requirements needed to deliver a Joint Feasibility Study/Outline Business Case for a New Joint Control room.

2.32 Significant progress in how Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service keeps the county safe

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has been commended for the improvements that it has made in keeping the county safe, in its second inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services. A full inspection of the service was carried out earlier this year and, in their report, the Inspectors say that they are "pleased to see the service has made significant progress since the 2018 inspection in how effectively and efficiently it keeps people safe and secure from fires and other risks.

The inspection looks in detail at work across three categories – effectiveness, efficiency, and people. The inspection found that there had been major improvements in the Service’s effectiveness at responding to and preventing fires and protecting the public through regulation.

These areas of work were individually graded as ‘Good’, and the Service received a ‘Good’ grading across the board for its operational effectiveness. Efficiency, making the best use of resources and having a robust plan to manage its finances well into the future, also received a ‘Good’ rating overall from the Inspectors. These areas had been graded as requires improvement in the previous inspection in late 2018.

They acknowledged that there is more work to do in the ‘People’ area, however, where the HMICFRS graded Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service as ‘requires improvement’. The ‘People’ area looks at work such as promoting the right values, ensuring fairness, and encouraging diversity. HMICFRS found that improvement is needed in each of these areas. They noted, however, that the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service leadership team is showing “strong strategic intent” to push forward in this area of work. HMICFRS praised the Service’s improvement and overall direction, saying that they “commend the service on the changes it has made and expect it to continue to resolve the further areas for improvement we have identified.”

I am very pleased that the independent assessment from HMICFRS confirms what I believed was the case – that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is providing a much-improved service in the way they keep the county safe. During the recent extraordinary heatwave, we saw our firefighters and staff working hard in very challenging situations and I know that people join me in thanking them. They should be proud of how much they have improved, and I always believed that moving under my governance, with increased opportunities for joint working, would enable Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service to deliver the best possible service to the people of this county.

I am disappointed by what HMICFRS had to say about values and inclusion and there is clearly much work that needs to be done in that area. I know the Chief Fire Officer and his team will be as disappointed as I am in the report’s findings, and I know they will be working just as hard to create a better culture as they have done to improve efficiency and effectiveness. I expect to see plans in place to improve the culture as soon as possible. I will also be looking for opportunities for further collaboration with Northamptonshire Police as both organisations work to build trust and confidence across the board.

2.33 Government White Paper on fire reform

The Government’s White Paper on the future of the fire service is an opportunity to fundamentally reform the fire service so that the professional skills of those firefighters and staff who do such outstanding work to keep the community safe can be used to their fullest extent within a structure fit for the risks we face today.

As one of just four Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners, I am directly elected to the public and am accountable to them. Since taking responsibility for our Fire and Rescue Service, it now has greater financial stability and has been able to plan to modernise and develop as an organisation.

The Chief Fire Officer and his team have the stability and autonomy they need, and our fire service is better equipped, prepared and able to respond when called on to do so. Our shared approach to buildings and professional services with the police has resulted in closer collaboration that makes sense to the public and can only result in better outcomes. But it takes more than response to deal with the changing risks that face our communities – prevention, protection, community resilience are all vital to public safety. We saw this clearly during the pandemic, when firefighters stepped up to carry out a variety of roles to keep people safe and keep public services moving.

That must be the catalyst for reform and to ensure our fire service is able to meet the challenges that face communities today and tomorrow. I welcome this opportunity to make changes that will enable firefighters to reach the highest professional standards, to have the most rewarding career path and to play the strongest role in community safety.

At the centre of the Government’s Fire Reform White Paper are plans to deliver:

- Increased public safety: by improving the professionalism of the fire and rescue service through modern workforce practices and potentially establishing a College of Fire and Rescue
- Improved accountability: through the proposals to transfer fire governance to a single elected individual, overseeing delivery by operationally independent Chief Fire Officers
- Better engagement with the public: through the 10-week consultation the government will listen to the views of the public and stakeholders, after which it will finalise its reform programme

The world has changed so much but the way the fire service is structured has simply not kept up. The white paper is an opportunity to ensure the fire service continues to play a central role in keeping the public safe.

3. Holding the Chiefs to account

3.1 Fire Accountability Board 14 January 2022

Budget 2022/2023

The Commissioner requests a presentation of final budget proposals for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service for 2022/2023 to include the treasury management and reserves strategies. Both the Commissioner and Chief Finance Officer recognised the significant work that had been undertaken to get to the current position on the budget. The Commissioner further acknowledged the amount of work that had taken place with government departments to build secure additional funding and thanked everyone involved. The Commissioner was satisfied that the Fire Service had been able to provide a proposed three-year balanced budget, subject to the assumptions outlined within the proposal. The Commissioner reiterated that it was essential that the Fire service delivered robustly against the proposed savings plan. This was required to achieve a balanced budget and to create the ability to reinvest in other areas. The Commissioner asked that the Chief Fire Officer appoint a senior officer to lead the operational review and also provide the indicative timescales for this work. This is an important piece of transformational work and as such, should be prioritised accordingly. The Commissioner formally approved the proposed budget.

3.2 Fire Accountability Board 8 February 2022

Budget conditions letter update

As part of the budget setting process for 2021/2022, the Commissioner and Chief Fire Officer agreed a budget conditions letter outlining areas that were to be delivered in this financial year. The Commissioner commended the progress that had been made on the capital budget and compliance with audit processes, noting that they had improved significantly over the past year. The Commissioner reiterated that the required £149k saving in the budget for 2022/2023 was in relation to cashable savings. While the Commissioner was pleased with the overall progress against the agreed budget conditions, he did raise some concerns about the pace of progress on the operational interoperability activity between Fire and Police. He requested that the Chief Fire Officer link in closely with the Chief Constable to ensure there was a shared vision and commitment to progress.

Code of Ethics paper update

In May 2021, the Fire Service in England adopted a national Code of Ethics. In July 2021 NFRS presented to the PFCC its plans to properly embed this into its daily business. The Commissioner requested an update on the progress on achieving this since this time, describing how the activity described in the July 2021 paper has continued and progressed and seeking actual examples of where this adopted code has made a difference. The Commissioner recognised that whilst the Code of Ethics was relatively new for the Fire Service nationally a significant amount of work had already been undertaken locally to embed these and accepted that whilst there had been a number of workstreams concerning ethics and EDI in the service it was difficult to determine what changes had taken place in terms of culture as a direct result of the code, rather than something else. As such the Commissioner requested a further update in relation to cultural changes brought about through all of these workstreams later in 2022.

3.3 Fire Accountability Board 8 March 2022

NFRS performance update

The Commissioner requires an update on the performance against the measures and metrics contained within the IRMP. The Chief Fire Officer provided a briefing on the performance of NFRS against the measures in the IRMP. Overall, the Commissioner was assured that progress continued to be made in reducing the risks to local people, with performance positive in most areas. The Commissioner was concerned about the increased rate of short-term sickness. The Chief Fire Officer stated that this was mainly covid related but that work was needed with some junior managers to ensure that repeated bouts of short-term sickness was identified earlier and managed appropriately. This work is underway. The Commissioner was pleased that the agreed 3-year high risk-based inspection programme was on track.

Grenfell Inquiry

The Commissioner requested a briefing that provides an end of year update on the implementation of actions arising from the Grenfell Tower Part 1 report. The Commissioner was provided with an update about continued progress relating the local action plan arising from the findings of the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry Part 1. This was considered alongside the recent HMICFRS inspection and it appears that

comments on that will be positive. The Commissioner is assured that at this point progress is good and appropriate and that there is strong governance around this.

3.4 Fire Accountability Board 10 May 2022

Internal Audit update

The Commissioner requires a report to provide an overview of all internal audits completed in 2021/2022, outlining all recommendations made, whether these have been accepted, progress against completion of required activity and timescales for completion, where they remain outstanding. The Commissioner was assured that the Fire and Rescue Service now had a process in place to manage internal audits; an improvement from when he took over governance of NFRS and that real progress was now being made. Whilst adherence to Policy had generally always been rated as good, this was not the case with compliance, but the Commissioner was now very pleased to see that compliance was now much better. There was a discussion over the audits relating to IT systems and data quality, which were areas where some deficiencies had been identified. He was provided with some assurances that work was underway to address these and while progress had not been as fast as he would like, this was being hindered by staff changes in the restructure of D&T as a department, which again was on course to be resolved. The Commissioner stated that he would require an update on these two audit reports and progress in 6 months' time.

Health & Safety Update

The NFRS health and safety policy requires an annual presentation on Health and Safety performance to the PFCC. The PFCC was presented with an up on the health and safety performance over the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, which meets the needs of internal policy. The Commissioner welcomed this update and the fact that it provided him with assurances that health and safety processes in the service were robust, with reducing numbers of incidents being reported. The processes appeared to both mitigate risks to staff and the public and allow for effective reporting. He drew comfort from the fact that even in the small number of incidents that were required to be reported to HSE, no action was taken by them. The Chief Fire Officer reported to the Commissioner that he was satisfied that Health and Safety processes in place were appropriate and satisfactory.

Emergency Cover Review

The Commissioner requested a briefing outlining the status and progress in the delivery of the NFRS Emergency Cover Review, to include terms of reference. The Commissioner was largely content with the proposed process to be followed involving the appointment of an external supplier to assess demand and risk but was not content that the paper he had been provided with contained a defined terms of reference to be agreed to. The Chief Fire Officer agreed these would be provided as a matter of priority. The Commissioner raised the point that the defined project team did not include representation from estates, fleet, finance and HR. The Chief Fire Officer assured him that this would be the case. There was a discussion in relation to timescales for this review, and the proposed times from the Chief Fire Officer involved two key dates, in July 2022 for the completion of risk and demand assessment and then October 2022 for the recommendations to be presented for agreement or adoption.

SAN H Airwave connection

Given some emerging concerns about the NFRS SAN H connection allowing access to the Airwave communication system and the life of this the Commissioner requested an update on this. The Assistant Chief Officer agreed to provide final recommendations on the SAN H issue w/c 6th June.

3.5 Fire Accountability Board 14 June 2022

Performance update

The Commissioner was presented with the regular quarterly update on the performance of NFRS against the metrics in the IRMP. Overall, the Commissioner was assured that fires and overall demand on the service were continuing to reduce, with the effect that local communities are safer from fire. This was particularly the case in respect of fires in people's homes which continued to see a long-term decline. The Commissioner noted the recent increase in secondary fires, which included issues such as bin fires and wildfires. The recent local trend in this is mirrored at a national level and following a discussion, the Commissioner asked the Chief Fire Officer to continue to monitor this, to explore potential options for additional interventions if this trend continued. The Commissioner expressed some concerns about increasing sickness levels with staff and asked whether absence management arrangements were robust. The Chief Fire Officer stated that there were good policies and procedures in place in relation to this but at some levels of supervision he and his team felt there could be improvements in the application of these and that there was work ongoing to ensure that this was the case. The Commissioner stated that he would continue to look at this over the next quarter and would hope to see some improvements. In terms of prevention the Commissioner was pleased to see a return to higher levels of home fire safety visits despite some of the pandemic-based restriction the service had been operating under over the past 12 months or more. He thanked the Chief Fire Officer for this focus.

Pension Abatement

The Commissioner is aware that firefighters can apply for the abatement of their pension, allowing retirement, with access to their pension lump sum and further ongoing employment with the drawing of their annual pension, at the point they cease employment. The Commissioner made it clear that his rationale as Fire Authority for requesting this report was to assure himself there was a fair and objective process in place for the authorisation of continued employment post retirement of firefighters and any pension abatement. The paper was supported by the NFRS policy on this matter. The Commissioner noted that the number of people that were affected by this was small. The Chief Fire Officer stated that there were good policies and procedures in place in relation to this, but he and his team felt there could be improvements in the application of these and that there was work ongoing to ensure that this was the case. The Commissioner stated that he would continue to look at this and would hope to see some improvements. The Commissioner expressed the need for the Chief Fire Officer to ensure that effective and proper succession planning was in place for key roles as a means of ensuring roles were undertaken rather than a reliance on this approach. He did not see evidence that this was the case across the board but wanted to ensure that proper planning was evident. The Commissioner made it clear that any abatement proposals moving forward need to be compliant with the LGA guidance and pension and HMRC requirements in this regard.

3.6 Fire Accountability Board 12 July 2022

Strategic outcomes requirements update

The Chief Fire Officer, as a part of the budget setting process for 2022/23, agreed a set of strategic outcome requirements with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. These were set out and agreed in a letter. The Commissioner requested an updated which outlines the progress made against the achievement of these to the end of June 2022. He agreed that some progress had been made across the range of measures recorded within it. The Commissioner made specific reference to aspects of the progress on Interoperability between Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and Northamptonshire Police and made the point that now a number of areas had been identified for further future development he expected to see more rapid progress on them. There was a lengthy discussion on matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion and the Commissioner summed this up by stating that there was much work still to do on this and this must now be a priority. The Chief Fire Officer reported that work on his Emergency Cover Review was on track in line with agreed timescales for reporting. The Commissioner accepted a plan for monthly updates to be provided to his office by AM Kerry Blair on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer.

National Operational Guidance and Fire Standards

In November 2021 the Chief Fire Officer presented the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, with an update outlining progress in relation to the implementation of National Operational Guidance and Fire Standards into the service. NFRS provided the Commissioner with an update on the progress of the implementation of National Operational Guidance and Fire Standards. It was noted that at this point there were over 1900 strategic actions agreed for NOG implementation; Progress was being made in relation to this and compliance overall in NFRS was positive at 81% and improving. It was reported by the Chief Fire Officer that for small services like Northamptonshire some expectations were unrealistic and there will be a few instances where an evidenced based decision might need to be made, with rationale as to why compliance was not favourable. The analysis that had been undertaken regarding the time allocated for On Call firefighter training would not be sufficient to allow full training to be NOG compliant. As such, NFRS have explored the options for an E learning platform that would allow greater flexibility in the delivery of this training. The Commissioner welcomed this and requested the associated costs are clearly identified for further discussion and approval where necessary. In relation to Fire Standards implementation the Commissioner asked the Chief Fire Officer to provide him with an indicative implementation timeline for the published 11 standards.

3.7 Police Accountability Board 14 January 2022

Budget 2022/2023

The Commissioner received an update and offered his thanks to everyone for the work undertaken to present a balanced budget over three years. The Commissioner welcomed the ambition being shown by the Chief Constable and his senior team to identify savings in the core budget that would assist ongoing investments in areas of operational business. There was a discussion about several investment proposals from the Chief Constable. It was agreed that if the Force made the savings proposed and, with the agreed use of balancing reserves, the proposed three-year budget was affordable. This was commended by the Commissioner. During the discussion on the investment proposals, it was made clear by the Commissioner that while these appeared to be affordable, he would wish to discuss these in more details with the

Chief Constable before agreeing to them and as such, given the viability of the budget proposals, this could be agreed at the next accountability board meeting on 8th February.

Budget conditions letter update

The Commissioner agreed that in most areas there had been positive progress and he thanked the Force for this. There was a discussion about progress in relation to interoperability; Whilst the Commissioner was satisfied that progress on the enabling services agenda was positive, he was less assured in relation to the operational interoperability workstreams. He also reiterated that he wished to quickly see the promised PCSO review.

3.8 Police Accountability Board 08 February 2022

Force matters of priority performance update

The Commissioner commented on what he considered the improved quality of the performance pack that Chief Officers were now utilising. The Commissioner was assured that there were signs of genuine improvement across a range of areas, and in the case of the Chief Constables 'matters of priority', the Force was currently achieving 22 of its 33 localised targets. The Commissioner expressed his concerns in relation to grade 1 response times and ASB satisfaction levels however, he was cognisant of the good work undertaken by the Force that assured him that there were genuine improvements across the board. It was noted that further improvements are also required in other areas including knife crime and neighbourhood crime.

2021 PEEL inspection

The Commissioner recognised that the Force had what appeared to be an effective governance and oversight process in place for responding to the recent PEEL inspection, with senior officer leadership. He was also pleased to see that initial progress had been made on some of the recommendations/AFI. The Commissioner asked for further details on the sign off process for areas of identified improvement and was assured by the robustness of the process in place between the force and HMICFRS. The Commissioner thanked the Chief Constable for the comprehensive update and stated that he would ask for quarterly updates against the milestones presented at this meeting.

Investment proposals.

The Commissioner agreed in the January Accountability Board that if the Force made the savings it proposed as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process, he was supportive of the Chief Constables Investment Proposals but that he would wish to discuss these in more detail before agreeing to them. The Chief Constables Investment proposals along with the supporting business case for each one were submitted for review on 7th December 2021 for consideration.

3.9 Police Accountability Board 08 March 2022

Violence against women and girls

The Commissioner was presented with an update that covered two issues. These were the Force response to the HMICFRS 2021 national report relating to the police response to violence against women and girls and progress against the 5 recommendations within it. The second was a presentation of the Northamptonshire Police plan to address VAWG. There was a discussion in relation to the impending

review of the Force protecting vulnerable people department, that will include investigative and support functions. The Commissioner requested that Nicci Marzec was consulted in the development of the Terms of Reference for this. The Commissioner also sought assurance that where it was appropriate, this review would also include partners. The Commissioner received the Force 4 P plan relating to violence against women and girls. He raised concerns about what appeared to be a downturn in performance in the Force responding to requests for information under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. This was acknowledged by the Chief Constable who provided him with assurances that this was recognised and unacceptable and would be rectified. The Commissioner recognised that progress was being made on this agenda but made the point that this was a high priority and he expected further improvements to be made and would look to reassess this in 3 months' time

EMSOU Forensic Services (FS)

The Commissioner received an update in relation to the performance of EMSOU (FS), which covered attendance at crime scenes and forensic evidence recovery rates. The presentation highlighted that there had been some process issues relating to scene attendance and this had been rectified. In addition, the Chief Constable had agreed to the recruitment of additional crime scene investigators from the current budget. There had been a reduction in the conversion rate of DNA and fingerprint identifications over the last 12 months and the analysis to identify the reasons for this was being undertaken. The Chief Constable acknowledged that this was not acceptable and that the Force needed to improve. The Commissioner agreed with this and was grateful that this work had already started but stated he would be seeking a further formal update on this later this year.

3.10 Police Accountability Board 10 May 2022

Budget Conditions Letter Update - Force strategic priorities/matters of priority update

The Commissioner thanked colleagues in the force for the quality of the data and supporting papers. The update provided the Commissioner with an assessment of how the Force had performed against the targets and measures set as part of the Chief Constable's agreed matters of priority for 2021/2022. There were a number of areas that resulted in discussion. Satisfaction with victims of anti-social behaviour has dropped. The Commissioner was pleased with a recently piloted approach to dealing with ASB which had seen early signs of improved levels of satisfaction but stated that he felt more needed to be done to better understand this issue. He was assured that recording of crimes overall and for high-risk matters such as domestic abuse was robust. The Commissioner acknowledged that there had been a change in the operating environment that had affected response times but was concerned about the drop in performance. While accepting that the Force response times for emergency calls was below the national NPCC target of 15 minutes he made clear he did not accept the change to this national target from a local one mid-year and reinforced to the Chief Constable the importance of response times. Overall, the Commissioner was assured that performance was moving in the right direction in many areas, with work still to do in others.

Integrated Offender management

The Commissioner received an update outlining the progress of integrated offender management in the County and welcomed the positive work that had been

undertaken over the last 6 months. The briefing that accompanied the paper demonstrated some positive case examples of some of the early successes. He also welcomed the positive commitment and support from the Probation Service. Overall, the Commissioner was pleased with progress and asked for an update report to be provided in 6 months

Stop & Search

The Commissioner welcomed the update from the Force on this subject. He noted that it was interesting that the Force received very few complaints relating to stop and search and in some cases, in areas affected by high crime levels, members of the public regularly asked officers to conduct these searches in greater numbers. The Commissioner was pleased with the increases in the seizures of knives and weapons recovered from stop and search activity. There was a discussion about disproportionality relating to black members of the community and while this is lower in the County than nationally there was still some evidence that this existed. The Commissioner challenged the Force to better understand this and address or evidence it and was assured that work is ongoing to do so.

3.11 Police Accountability Board 14 June 2022

Force 5-year plan update

In 2021 the Chief Constable wrote and delivered his 5-year plan, outlining the vision for the future shape and delivery for Northamptonshire Police. The Commissioner requested an update that outlines the progress to date for delivery against this plan. The Chief Constable presented an update outlining some of the highlights on progress towards his 5-year vision, one year after publication. The paper outlined progress in several areas, within the five high level outcomes or aspirations set out in the vision's strategic roadmap:

- Quality of Service
- Prevention & Intervention
- Effective Strategic Partnerships
- Release Capacity &
- Healthy Culture

During the presentation there were discussions relating to the issue of positive outcomes and the longer-term vision for this, following initial improvements in the past year. Both the Chief Constable and Commissioner agreed there was scope for further improvements here. The Commissioner challenged the Chief Constable in relation to the benefit that the public would see from the work being undertaken on the Force branding. The Chief Constable made the point that this work was aimed at setting an appropriate tone for the professionalism of the Force moving forwards, particularly in relation to service with an improved customer focus. The Commissioner acknowledged the improvements the Force had made but reflected that there was still more to do; notably, putting the public first and improved outcomes, to deliver the outstanding Force that both he and the Chief Constable aspired to. The Commissioner stated that he would have liked to have seen a more explicate reference to the Police Fire and Crime Plan in the document given that this is how he will evaluate the success of the Chief Constables vision.

Internal Audit

The Commissioner requested an update that outlines the internal audits from 2021/22 and include the overall findings, any recommendations made and whether these are accepted by the Force. While acknowledging the fact that audits should be in many ways targeted at areas where there might be concerns or are high risk, the Commissioner did challenge the number of such audits over the past year where only limited levels of assurance had been provided. The Force provided assurance to the Commissioner that improvement had been made. He confirmed that the Force Assurance Board is now responsible for ensuring that where issues were identified in audits they are prioritised and rectified in a timely manner. The Commissioner noted that there were a few areas such as seized property and NCALT training that regularly appeared on audit reports, and he expected these to be resolved and closed. He also acknowledged that improvements had been made to the overall management of these processes and as a result he had greater confidence in the monitoring measures that the Force now had in place.

3.12 Police Accountability Board 12 July 2022

Strategic outcomes requirements update

The Chief Constable, as a part of the budget setting process for 2022/23, agreed a set of strategic outcome requirements with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. These were set out and agreed in a letter. The Commissioner requested an update outlining the progress made against the achievement of these to the end of June 2022. There was discussion on several points, notably response times, positive outcome rates, quality of service and digital forensics. The Commissioner made the point that he was pleased with the measures and KPI that the Chief Constable had adopted for judging activity and success against his measures of success. He made the point that his office had queried some of the actual baselines and metrics as they were open to interpretation and wanted complete clarity and we awaited a response from the Chief Constable on those but agreed with the broad thrust of them. The Commissioner stated that where the Force had requested additional investment in places like vetting and DFU that vetting, and recruitment was being prioritised as some of these vacancies still existed The Commissioner was assured that there was progress being made in most areas, for this early stage of the year. He again reinforced his expectation that both the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer would ensure there was pace in the operational interoperability work.

HMICFRS update

At the February 2022 accountability board, the Chief Constable provided an update relating to the 2021 HMICFRS PEEL inspection report. At that meeting it was agreed that there would be quarterly follow up reports. The Commissioner was assured that the Chief Constable had robust oversight and governance processes in place to deliver against the PEEL inspection AFI's. He reinforced the point that activity still needed to be delivered but was assured with the Chief Constable comments that all were on track to meet his expectations and will have been actioned by the end of Q3 2022. The Commissioner requested clarity from the Chief Constable about his comments in the report on the Force being graded as good. The Chief Constable confirmed that it was his intention that the Force would be graded as good in all areas at the next PEEL inspection. The Commissioner stated he would require a further report in 3 months' time.

Violence Against Women and Girls report

In March 2022 the Chief Constable provided the PFCC with a report outlining progress against the September 2021 HMICFRS report “Police response to violence against women and girls” and a progress update in relation to the Force Strategy and delivery plan for VAWG. At that meeting it was agreed that this would be subject to a further update in a quarter. The Commissioner was assured that progress had been made across a number of areas of this important agenda. He welcomed the fact that the Force were cognisant that policing the night-time economy and the risks posed to women was as much a cultural matter as a policing matter and that there will be additional training to support that. He welcomed the progress made against the 5 recommendations in the HMICFRS report but stated that he would have expected more detail in the paper on the work against the internal plan

4. Summary of PFCC Decisions taken

- [Decision Record 262 – Force Vehicle Purchases](#)
- [Decision Record 263 – Target Hardening Services](#)
- [Decision Record 264 – Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension](#)
- [Decision Record 265 – PPC vehicles](#)
- [Decision Record 266 – Additional Independent Domestic Violence Advisors](#)
- [Decision Record 267 – ANPR Installations](#)
- [Decision Record 268 – Sunflower Funding](#)
- [Decision Record 269 – National Police Coordination Centre](#)
- [Decision Record 270 – UoN Contract Extension](#)
- [Decision Record 271 – Temporary Labour Contract Extension](#)
- [Decision Record 272 – Northamptonshire Police and Fire Collaboration Arrangements](#)
- [Decision Record 273 – External Audit Services](#)
- [Decision Record 274 – Supply of Multi-Functional Devices](#)
- [Decision Record 275 – Qlik Licencing Extension](#)
- [Decision Record 276 – Orbis Licence Renewal](#)
- [Decision Record 277 – Skoda Vehicle Purchases Contract](#)
- [Decision Record 278 – Microsoft Licences](#)
- [Decision Record 279 – Supply of Goodyear Tyres](#)
- [Decision Record 280 – Provision of GIS Software](#)
- [Decision Record 281 – Provision of Volvo cars](#)
- [Decision Record 282 – Contract Variations for Voice re Sunflower Funding](#)
- [Decision Record 283 – Brook Street temporary labour contract extension](#)
- [Decision Record 283 – Brook Street temporary labour contract extension](#)
- [Decision Record 284 – Contract Extension Degree Holder Entry Program](#)
- [Decision Record 285 – Contract Extension Supply of Fuel](#)
- [Decision Record 286 – Out of Court Disposals for Domestic Abuse Perpetrators](#)
- [Decision Record 287 Record Management Strategy](#)
- [Decision Record 288 – Station CCTV systems](#)
- [Decision Record 289 – Call off contract for BMW Vehicles](#)
- [Decision Record 290 – Permanent Posts in Estates](#)
- [Decision Record 291 – Cleaning Contract Extension and Variation](#)
- [Decision Record 292 – Police Diesel Supplies](#)
- [Decision Record 293 – Voice Contract Renewal](#)
- [Decision Record 294 – Sunflower Contract Renewal](#)
- [Decision Record 295 – Integrated Communication Control System](#)

- [Decision Record 296 – Project and Portfolio Management System](#)
- [Decision Record 297 – Safer Streets Contract Variation](#)

Key Fire and Rescue Decisions

- [NFRS Decision Record 78 NCFRA Firefighters Apprenticeship Contract Variation](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 79 External Audit Services Procurement](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 80 Replacement Command & Control System](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 81 NCFRA Firefighters Apprenticeship Additional Contract Variation](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 82 Network Connectivity Services](#)
- [NFRS Decision Record 83 Short Term Tenancy Agreement with EMAS](#)

5. Recommendations

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

Stephen Mold

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Appendix 1:

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PLAN

Q1 22/23

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.



Q1 22/23 **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 education as well as fire. One of the priorities centres around early interventions and youth engagement, which is built around the pillars of resilience and involves working closely with the OPFCC Youth Team and Neighbourhood Police Teams.

Reduction in arson is another priority and is strongly linked to ASB. Themed proactive work around safer neighbourhoods is strongly linked to ASB reduction and regularly feeds Community One for partnership tasking and problem solving.

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 provides assistance 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 can also involve Fire Officers incorporating advice on preventing domestic burglary, doorstep crime and fraud on behalf of the police.

Further increase the involvement of our staff in prevention activities to target risk in our communities: Other than HFSVs and HMO checks, the Fire Service's plans to widen community engagement includes engaging with seldom heard community groups and to undertake community safety activities based on local risk and national campaigns. Recent examples include the Rushden station targeting Rushden Lakes leisure complex throughout the summer period, supporting evacuation exercises at the local cinema and carrying out water safety engagement targeted at youths. The Kettering station supported two local voluntary sector groups, John's Happy Place (mental health day centre) and St Edwards Church Hall (pop-up café for the homeless) to deliver appropriate safety advice which are aligned to national campaigns regarding the homeless.

Increase organisational capacity in protection, ensuring our warranted Protection Officers can focus on the most complex areas: The protection department has 13 staff, this includes 8 frontline fire safety inspectors. The headline statistics for protection delivery in 2021/22 are:

- The team undertook 561 inspections within the Risk Based Inspection Plan (RBIP) of which 15% required follow up activity.
- 319 targeted risk management jobs were completed to react to emerging issues or concerns.
- The team reacted to and investigated 80 concerns by 3rd parties over the fire safety in a premises.
- 99.6% of consultations under Building Regulations were responded to within the initial 15 days.
- 495 consultations were received and responded to in total.



Q1 22/23 **Police** Priority Commentary

At a Glance:

Reduce Repeat Victimization: Progress has been made by the Force in the past year in dealing with domestic abuse with the Force reporting a fall in the number of repeat victims. At the end of June 2022, the repeat victim rate over a 12-month period was at 41.7% which is below the previous 2 financial years (including pre-COVID). Greater reductions were seen from those victims who are most at harm with repeat rates reducing for both 'high' risk and 'medium' risk persons. The national VAWG agenda is likely to encourage victims to come forward and will likely lead to an increase in repeat victimisation rates in the future, however focussing on those victims at most risk has to take priority for future performance. My office will continue to work with the Force to reduce repeat victimisation for other crime types such as burglary and ASB.

Deliver and maintain the ANPR network in Northamptonshire to ensure it supports the prevention, disruption and detection of crime: Over 150 new ANPR cameras have been installed across the county over the past 18 months, which more than doubled the size of the ANPR network in Northamptonshire. The new cameras marked a £1.3m investment by the Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable.





Q1 22/23 **Working Together** Priority Commentary

At a Glance:

Give people the opportunity to participate in schemes that make the county safer: As a major part of my strategy to tackle violence against women and girls I have promoted within the county the Licensing Security & Vulnerability Initiative (Licensing SAVI). This initiative encourages venues to improve operational security and those who take the assessment are given a star rating to display and show the efforts to improve safety. As a result, within recent months, three establishments within the county have signed up to the licensing initiative that will make their venues safer for customers and staff. My office will continue to promote Licensing SAVI and appeal for more establishments in signing up to the licence.

Ensure that people have access to information and support to help them prevent crime and keep themselves safe: During May 2022, staff from my office and officers from Northamptonshire Police joined colleagues across the UK to prevent and tackle knife crime, as part of the national Operation Sceptre week of action. Knife crime is a priority within my Police, Fire and Crime Plan and the week of action coincided with the visit of the iconic 27ft tall knife angel statue which toured the county during the month.

Invest in target hardening schemes in areas of the highest risk to reduce crime: During Q1 22/23, work concluded to improve safety for residents in the Hemmingwell estate of Wellingborough. The Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner successfully bid for more than £400,000 in funding last year in the second round of Safer Streets funding by the Home Office. Much of the work has focused on new and more secure doors being fitted at more than 300 properties on the estate, in partnership with Greatwell Homes. Ten new CCTV cameras have been added to extend coverage in the area, as well as several environmental improvements such as the removal of derelict garage blocks and cutting back trees to improve visibility. And more than £40,000 worth of home security products were handed out to residents who attended five community events. The office has been successful for the fifth time in securing through seven bids over three years to the Safer Streets Fund, which also included the Safety of Women at Night fund. This has helped to bring an additional £4.2 million of funding to the county which has enabled the office to invest in schemes to keep communities safer. More information will be provided within the next performance report.

Develop the way that we share critical data between both organisations and with other partners: Over the past 12 months there have been positive steps made in terms of Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue service collaboration with the formation of the Digital & Technology Department under Enabling Services. The infrastructure for both services is now managed centrally by the Digital & Technology department. This gives a full overview of the digital infrastructure within the estates, where all updates are completed over the network. Utilising the Microsoft Teams platform for example, now means that Police and Fire colleagues are able to message, call and see calendar information in the other's organisation. However there is still more to achieve to enable further collaboration. Moving forward there is a lot more planned, such as integration for the service desk, risk management and further infrastructure work. This will provide a solid foundation from which both services can build functionality and provide a more cohesive service for Northamptonshire. The OPFCCs Digital & Technology Delivery Manager is an integral part of overseeing this transition to a more digitally enabled blue light service, ensuring collaboration where appropriate.



Q1 22/23 **Fire** Priority Commentary

At a Glance:

Emergency Cover Arrangements: Terms of Reference and timescales for the review of emergency cover have been agreed with the Chief Fire Officer. Demand analysis has commenced with a view to consideration of a variety of scenarios or change. The OPFCC are receiving a monthly update on progress and a final report with recommendations is expected to be presented to the Fire Accountably Board during the Autumn.

Risk Profile of the County: Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service has published a new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The CRMP was published after a public consultation, and will cover a three-year period up to 2025. The plan is the services response to the recently published Fire & Rescue plan and is supported by the Chief Fire Officer Vision 25 document. Following the publication of the profile, I have agreed with the Chief Fire Officer's recommendations, such as redeployment of resources.

Incident numbers continue the long term and national downward trend, albeit increasing slightly on last year's figures. At the end of Q2 21/22, the average response time to all incidents was 10 minutes and 25 seconds. The fire and rescue service aren't currently achieving their target of responding to all incidents, on average within 10 minutes in any categories such as fire and RTCs for example. Panel members should be reassured however that their response to fires are under 10 minutes. Attending complex incidents such as RTCs are resulting in the average response times to be over 10 minutes.

Collaboration Working: Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is to launch a pilot scheme to build the skills and capacity of fire crews in carrying out inspection visits at homes in multiple occupations (HMOs). The scheme will see firefighters in Wellingborough, Kettering and Daventry carrying out compliance checks in 30 HMOs across those three towns. During the checks, the crews will be supported by specialist Fire Protection Officers.



Q1 22/23 **Police** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Police Officer Recruitment: Latest data from the Home Office as part of the Police Uplift Programme (Op Uplift), shows Northamptonshire Police currently having 35.6% (33.4% in June 2021), of female representation. Aspirations are for the force to be in line with the county's female population (50.5%); the recruitment of female officers is on an upward trend and above the current national representation of 34.4%. Similarly the force has aspirations to be in line with the county's BAME population (8.1%) and is currently achieving 4.5% (3.8% in March 2020). Both of these aims are a large undertaking both at a local and national level and could potentially take several years to mirror the county's population.

Strengthen Local Policing: The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable have a shared vision to have in place over 1,500 police officers by the end of March 2023. This is on track with 1,453 officers in place at the end of June 2022 which is the highest number it has ever been in the county. This figure includes increasing the establishment of neighbourhood team officers which has been doubled and currently exceeds over 100 officers across the county.

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

Since January 2022, the Home Office have produced a Digital Crime and Performance Pack which uses data to track progress against the national crime and policing measures, one of these measures is neighbourhood crime. The pack shows that the Force has seen a -47% reduction in neighbourhood crime, which is the largest nationally (data up to May 2022) and significantly above the -30% reduction within our MSG. Residential burglary has also seen a sizeable reduction of -48% over a 12-month period and is the third largest reduction seen nationally and has halved over the last three years, thanks to Police operations such as Operation Crooked. This is a dedicated burglary team which cover the whole county and has been in place since April 2019 following investment from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Since the launch of Operation Crooked, the reduction of household burglaries has meant there are 2,500 fewer victims of burglary each year and the team have been responsible for hundreds of arrests. There is still work to be done however in reducing the current increasing trend with robbery and vehicle crime.

Neighbourhood Policing: At the end of Q1 22/23, response times are generally slower than the previous financial years. Grade 1 (G1) demand continues to be high, impacting on response times, which are generally slower than the previous financial years. The G1 urban 12-month rolling average response time was 12 minutes & 30 seconds which is slower than the previous 12 months (11 minutes & 35 seconds). The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has set clear expectations with the Chief Constable that he does not expect response times to increase further, and that he will be reviewing 'response' with a holistic approach such as improvements with investigation standards progress being made with victim satisfaction levels. Over the last 12-months there has been an increase with visibility levels with response and neighbourhood policing teams around the county, particularly within priority areas.

Violent Crime: As the PFCC, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), continues to be a priority within my Police, Fire and Crime Plan, as well as a national focus for central government. My office were once again successful in securing Home Office funding for the Safer Streets round 3 and the Safety of Women at Night (SWAN) initiative. These initiatives aimed at helping women and girls feel safer when out and about in busy town centres and public spaces, especially during the night-time economy. The bids, were used to deploy several interventions, including additional CCTV coverage in the Racecourse & Becketts park, safer routes and the SNO Van in Northampton. During my term in office, I will work with the Chief Constable, to set out a clear ambition to increase support of victims and survivors, increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice and reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls in the long term. Further to this, the office has secured an additional £400,000 from the Safer Street Fund for further interventions for the Northampton and Kettering night-time economy.



Q1 22/23 **Working Together** Priority Commentary

At a Glance:

Visible Presence in Rural Communities: Recent articles relating to providing a visible presence regarding rural communities are as follows:

- [Neighbourhood Beat Buses](#)
- [Northamptonshire Search & Rescue \(NSAR\)](#)

Communities: Neighbourhood Alert continues to be a key platform for the OPFCC, Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service to keep local communities across the county informed about relevant incidents, information and events in the local area. At the end of June 2022, membership stood at over 30,000 and continues to grow. PCSOs continue to encourage locals to sign up when out on patrol in their beat areas. This will continue to be emphasised to PCSOs across the county to encourage take up as part of their daily engagements.

Road Safety Fund: My office continues to award grants through the Road Safety Community Fund which awards grants of between £500 and £5,000 that help to support the Northamptonshire Strategic Road Safety Plan. The strategic plan was created through the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance (NSRA), which brings together representatives from Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service, the OPFCC and Northamptonshire Highways. For further information about the amount of funding which has been provided to date can be located here:-

- [Road Safety Community Fund](#)



PERFORMANCE REPORT: Protect & Support those who are vulnerable



Q1 22/23 **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 22.

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 and within the last 12 months, 62 HMO protection checks were undertaken by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service around the county. 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 also allows the Officers on safety throughout the property, not just the shared, communal areas.

An example of the additional value these checks can have has been highlighted recently at an HMO which provides accommodation for adults with learning difficulties. In addition to the check being undertaken on the fire safety within the premises, crews engaged with residents, providing advice and information regarding fire appliances and have subsequently arranged for a station visit to occur. The Service are now leading on the additional premises overseen by the same housing group.

Work with housing providers, developers, and businesses to minimise risk and keep people safe: A guide to assessing occupancy levels in licensed premises has been developed by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, which provides audio, visual and written guidance for public assembly buildings. The guidance is proving to be one of the most popular pages on the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service website, achieving over 1,500 hits during Q1 21/22. More information about the guidance and to access the video can be found at:

<https://www.northantsfire.gov.uk/guide-to-assessing-your-occupancy-limit/>

PERFORMANCE REPORT: Protect & Support those who are vulnerable



Q1 22/23 **Police** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Deliver robust enforcement & awareness campaigns to reduce the number of knives on our streets: Levels of knife crime have fallen by 10.1% (-58) over the last year, continuing the downward trend seen since throughout 2020/21. Repeat perpetrators of knife crime has seen a year on year increase of +2% and is starting to show an increasing trend across the force, with 22.5% of perpetrators in the last 12 months having committed more than x1 offence. Knife crime is a matter of priority for the Force and it is highly important that repeat perpetrators are tackled, as doing so would have a great impact on the overall demand reduction and decline in harm caused by knife offences.

More perpetrators are being brought to justice with many knife crime offences attracting charges. At the end of June 2022, 26.1% of knife crimes were positively resolved which is an increase on the previous 12 months. Despite some positive achievements for knife crime in 2021/22 with more arrests, less victims and reductions in knife crime; the Force remain an outlier and are some distance away from the national and our MSG average. My office will continually monitor our performance against our peers and will be holding the Chief Constable to account in terms of seeing long-term local improvements. 'Threat' offences account for the majority of knife crime demand within the county rather than 'actual' usage offences, which remain low.

Reduce harm from domestic abuse, pursuing perpetrators, supporting victims, and using rehabilitation and prevention programmes to improve positive outcomes for victims: At the end of 2021/22, Northamptonshire Police data showed a reduction in repeat victims and repeat offenders. More arrests have been made at a time when the national trend had been decreasing and more victims have been successfully protected as a result of different tactics, including an increase in the use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO). The months within Q1 22/23 however has seen domestic abuse demand coming into the Force below forecasted levels, especially between May and June which is 8% lower than in 2021. This is opposite to the national trend which remains similar to Summer 2021. Analysis has been commissioned by the Force to try to gauge an understanding of the decrease. We will be monitoring this closely.

The positive outcome ratio in the last 12 months to June 2022 was at 13.7% and continues remains strong. This level has been fairly stable in the past 6 months with continued utilisation of Out Of Court Disposals (OOC) through the aid of Project PIPA and is helping to improve the positive outcomes ratio.

There were a total of 1,558 police referrals into the MARAC (an increase of 3%), in addition to an increase in referrals into the Sunflower Centre. Out of the 3,674 referrals into the Sunflower Centre, just under three quarters were repeat victim referrals and subsequently victims were contacted by the team for support, advice and safeguarding.

PERFORMANCE REPORT: Protect & Support those who are vulnerable



Q1 22/23 **Working Together** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Continue to invest in provision for young people, to prevent them from becoming involved in, or victims of, crime with a specific focus on the impact of knife related crime: Since it's establishment in January 2020, the OPFCC Youth Service have established 5 main areas around the county (Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Northampton and Wellingborough), where they continue to conduct interactions with young people, providing educational sessions through detached work and have now had interactions with over 12,000 young people. At the end of June 2022, the team have delivered over 800 individual detached sessions, targeting interventions such as emotional wellbeing, forming positive relationships, staying safe and gang awareness. The service also works with individuals within smaller groups and on a one-to-one basis where the team have established positive working relationships with a multitude of schools across the breadth of the county. Individuals who finish their interventions with the team through groupwork and one-to-one sessions, continue to make good progress. This has been demonstrated with over 80% of those individuals who are most vulnerable noticing an improvement within subject matters such as 'physical health', 'where you live', 'being safe', 'relationships', 'feelings and behaviour', 'friends' and 'confidence and self-esteem' following interventions with the youth service and positive actions the individuals have taken.

Carry out awareness campaigns so that people can recognise and report the signs of exploitation: Northamptonshire Police joined the Children's Society, British Transport Police (BTP) and the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre in asking the public to #LookCloser in order to spot children and young people who are being exploited by criminals. The #LookCloser campaign is designed to increase awareness of the signs and indicators of child exploitation and abuse to encourage members of the public and those working in the service, retail and transport industries to report concerns promptly to the police. During the campaign, officers from Northamptonshire Police joined colleagues from the BTP, handing out leaflets and engaging with staff and passengers at stations in the county to alert them to the signs. In addition, Northamptonshire Police officers visited town centres and engaged with hotels, retailers and fast-food outlets, sharing information and encouraging people to look out for warning signs of child criminal exploitation and to report it. Further information about the national campaign can be found [here](#).



PERFORMANCE REPORT: Effective Justice

Q1 22/23 **Fire** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Ensure that enforcement activity in relation to fire safety legislation priorities public safety: Under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, all enforcement and formal action must relate to the protection of life. In 2021/22, 24 enforcement notices were issued, 7 prohibition/restriction notices and 78 informal notifications of deficiencies.





Q1 22/23 **Police** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Increasing positive outcome rates for victims of crime: The percentage of crimes in the county that resulted in a positive outcome is the highest its been for some time and for the year to date (June 22), stands at 14.4%. At the end of 2021/22 the force achieved their target of exceeding 14% and this has continued to improve into the new financial year. This has led to county being first within our MSG and for our national ranking moving from 34th to 5th.

One driver for the improvements seen towards improving positive outcomes has been the increased focus on the use of out of court disposals (OOC). OOCs are community resolutions and have been used to good effect in “low harm” domestic abuse incidents via the [Project PIPA programme](#).

Monitoring the quality of investigations and work to further improve standards: In the twelve months to June 2022, the amount of criminal investigations closed because of ‘evidential difficulties’ stood at 44.4%. Cases closed for evidential difficulties are often a result of victims not supporting further police action, Northamptonshire Police analysis shows that 22.8% were closed due to the victim not wanting the case to proceed. This is seeing a small increasing trend but overall remains below the national average.

Other reasons for cases being closed without a conviction are the CPS or the police deeming the investigation ‘not in the public interest’, offenders being too ill or too young, or settlements being made outside of court. At the end of June 2022, this stood at 17.8% and is in a relatively stable position, however the Force remains above the national average and are currently ranked 25th nationally and slowly edging closer to the average.

Conviction rates within the county are seeing a gradual deterioration which stem from systemic court issues and the impact this has on victims and witnesses. This is an issue nationally, not just within the county. Reductions in conviction rates are mainly from non-VAWG offences which have remained fairly stable. The OPFCC will continue to monitor conviction rates and platform its concerns at the East Midlands Criminal Justice Board



Q1 22/23 **Working Together** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Working with partners to ensure justice is as swift as possible: Challenges, presented largely by COVID-19 has resulted in concerns nationally surrounding the workloads and backlogs within the courts. Northamptonshire is no exception to this, particularly around the Magistrates court pre-charge backlogs which has seen one of the biggest increases nationally and remains a focus for discussion in the East Midlands Criminal Justice Board. The impact of the Barrister's strikes during the summer period will have also added to trial delays across England and Wales.

As chair of the East Midlands Criminal Justice Board, I continue to raise concerns with partners over timeliness and the backlog issues, this included the OPFCC presenting the local findings from the Criminal Justice System Scorecard to the board during May 2022, which highlighted the county taking one of the longest number of days (76 "median" days) from when a crime is recorded to either the police making a charging decision or where the decision is to pass to the CPS for that decision. This was above the national average and has been discussed with the force and partners.

Provide effective support for victims and witnesses that meets their needs: VOICE continues to deliver services to a wide range of victims, with referral volumes continue to be in line with pre-COVID levels. Domestic Abuse (DA) continues to account for the largest group of referrals and generally accounts to around a quarter of all VOICE referrals. Demand into the Sunflower Centre remains above pre-COVID levels, however the last 3 months has experienced a drop in referrals. This correlates with domestic abuse demand coming into the Force being below forecasted levels (as mentioned in page 8)

VOICE have experienced an increase with the levels of accepted support for all valid adult referrals. This stood at 6.8% at the end of June 2022, which is a 1% increase compared with the same reporting period in 2021/22.

At the end of June 2022 the VOICE Witness Care Team reported an average witness attendance rate of 71.1%, this is below the national average of 84% and notable reductions in comparison to 2020/21 levels (87.9%), however this is a similar picture nationally with the increased workload of the courts. This is a similar picture nationally, however this matter is currently being investigated by the OPFCC.

PERFORMANCE REPORT: Modern services that are for the future



Q1 22/23 **Working Together** Priority Commentary At a Glance:

Embed and further develop the enabling services approach so that both organisations have strong professional support to take forward transformation: Over the last 12-months good progress has been made with Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue, with them now sharing key enabling services operations such as Human Resources, finance, estates, transport and digital departments. The information governance is now being brought together between both organisations with a timeline for implementation of September 2022.

Make sure that both organisations have access to technology giving them the best data to inform service delivery: The building blocks to ensure that both organisations have access to the best data are increasingly in place. The tools, processes and structures between both organisations are making real progress and on a more consistent basis.

Ensure greater, and more effective, collaboration between both services to maximise effectiveness and efficiency: Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue service joined forces in April 22 to take part in a mock-up road traffic collision exercise. The drill involved a simulated two vehicle accident, with one colliding into a train carrying flammable materials. Exercises such as this help each agency to work collaboratively and strategically to use their specialist skills and equipment to safely release and 'save the lives' of casualties. The Commissioner has requested in his Strategic Outcomes Requirements letter to the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer, as part of the budget setting process for 2022/2023, that they both openly explore potential future collaborations for enabling service functions.

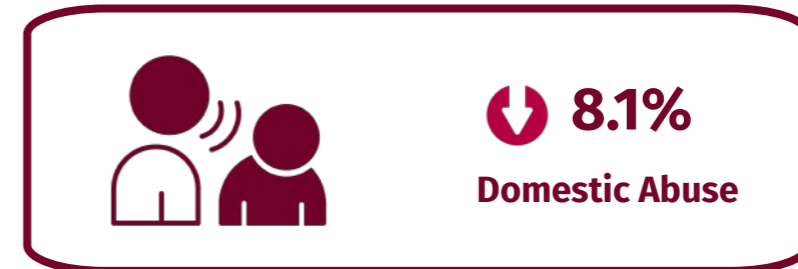
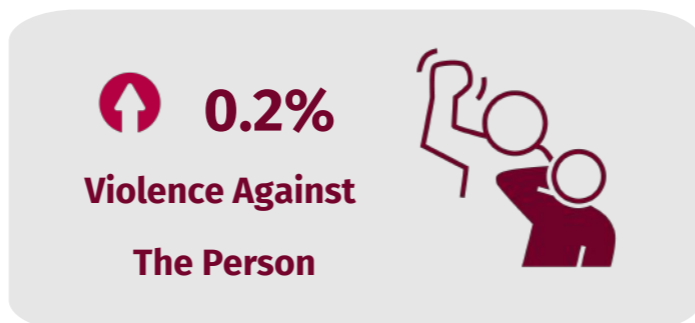
Prepare our fleet, estate, and processes to allow us to meet the Government carbon targets: The Government has set a goal of 2030 to have an established roadmap of how businesses, including public sector organisations, will be working towards becoming carbon neutral by 2050. In light of this, Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service hosted a Sustainability Forum to consider how both organisations can become carbon neutral and to start to refine their strategies for the future sustainability of their fleet, equipment and estate. Northamptonshire were the first to host such an event and we are leading in this area nationally.

Ensuring that the estate and fleet of Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue service are affordable and sustainable into the future is very important. Darby House, is the flagship shared building for the OPFCC, Northamptonshire Police and the Fire and Rescue service. When the building was purchased in 2020, it had an energy rating certificate of E, which is much below the average for a commercial building. However following the refurbishment of the Darby House, the building now has an energy rating of A+. Sustainable improvements included LED lighting on a sensor system, air source heat pumps and data driven thermostats.

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POLICING IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



Further details (Inc. crime volumes), can be found on page 2 onwards.

CRIME FIGURES 12 MONTHS TO YEAR ENDING MARCH 2022



CRIME	TOTAL CRIMES April 2020 - March 2021	TOTAL CRIMES April 2021 - March 2022	Variance	
All Crime (volumes of victims)	61,373 (51,430)	61,888 (52,448)	+515 (+1,018)	+1.1% (+2.0%)
ASB	15,127	13,939	-1,188	-7.9%
Domestic Abuse	18,755	17,226	-1,529	-8.1%
Knife Crime	718	659	-59	-8.2%
Neighbourhood Crime (residential burglary, personal robbery, theft from the person & vehicle crime)	7,266	6,598	-668	-9.2%
Rape & Other Sexual Offences	2,569	2,960	+391	+15.2%
Violence Against The Person	27,322	27,388	+66	+0.2%



ALL CRIME & POSITIVE OUTCOMES



1.1% All Crime



14.1% Positive Outcomes

[Information on Crime Recording](#)

[Types of Crime Outcomes](#)

[Report A Crime](#)

Overall crime levels nationally have seen a 15.8% increase over the last 12-months (April 2021 - March 2022), with local crime levels increasing by 1.1% over the same period. This is the lowest increase in crime across the country.

14.1% of all crime positively resolved in the county. This is the 8th best recorded nationally in the last 12 months and is up from 11.8% which recorded at the end of March 2021. Some examples of positive outcome types include charge, cautions, penalty notices, community resolution and out of court disposals.



ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)



↓ 7.9% ASB Incidents

[What is ASB?](#)
[Report ASB](#)

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's commitment to delivering early intervention and engagement activities to younger people in the county has been supported by a collaboration between the joint Police and Fire Arson Task Force and the Commissioner's Targeted Youth Service. The initiative launched in January 2022 as part of a 12-week targeted youth programme that educates young people about risk and danger where they engaged with Year 7 students at Kettering Science Academy. Recent arsons in and around Kettering provided real-life examples of the risks and consequences of anti-social behaviour. The teams will continue to roll out a series of events over the coming months.

The growth in police officer levels has allowed the Force to deploy additional officers into neighbourhood policing teams, which has allowed them to undertake a more focused and consistent problem solving approach to ongoing and persistent ASB issues.



DOMESTIC ABUSE



8.1% Domestic Abuse

[What is Domestic Abuse?](#)

[Report Domestic Abuse](#)

[Support for Domestic Abuse Victims](#)

One of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's key priorities has been early intervention, which helps to keep people out of the criminal justice system and provides support to families and young people in Northamptonshire. The Commissioner set up the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) team who work alongside Northamptonshire Police and the local authorities to identify families in difficulty at an early stage and step-in to offer support to prevent issues escalating further. Their work is complemented by four domestic abuse (DA) Support Officers, whose role is to help people in incidents where the police have been called specifically to a domestic incident regarded as low level. Since March 2022, the DA Support Officers have dealt with 1,011 incidents, supporting 1,817 children.

Reducing DA and supporting victims remains a key issue for the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable.



KNIFE CRIME



 **8.2% Knife Crime**

[What is Knife Crime?](#)
[Report Knife Crime](#)

The Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner has engaged with young people across the county about the efforts he is taking to reduce incidents of crime, particularly involving schoolchildren. This included visiting Glamis Hall in Queensway, Wellingborough, to speak with students from Weavers Academy and Finedon Mulso CE Junior School.


Northamptonshire Police have increased its use of stop search powers and weapons sweeps in hot spot areas of the county under Operation Sceptre. This has seen an increase in seizures for weapons and knives and in turn has supported the reductions in knife crime seen within the county in recent months.



NEIGHBOURHOOD CRIME

Op Cracked



 **9.2% Neighbourhood Crime**
(residential burglary, personal robbery,
theft from the person & vehicle crime)

[What is Neighbourhood Crime?](#)
[Report a Neighbourhood Crime](#)

The Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse MP, visited Hemmingwell in Wellingborough to get a closer look at how the Safer Streets scheme is improving the lives of residents. More than £400,000 has been invested in the project, which was run by the Office of Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold, and partners North Northamptonshire Council and Greatwell Homes. It has delivered 550 new doors at properties owned by Greatwell Homes to enhance safety, new CCTV coverage has been installed and hundreds of residents have received free home security products. As well as the current project in Hemmingwell, last year's Safer Streets saw similar improvements in parts of Northampton, Kettering and Wellingborough.



RAPE & OTHER SEXUAL OFFENCES



15.2% Rape & Other Sexual Offences

[What are Sexual Offences?](#)

[Report A Sexual Offence](#)

[Support for Victims of Rape & Other Sexual Offences](#)

Staff who work at three popular Northampton bars have received training to help them identify sexual harassment and intervene safely. The Picturedrome, The Old White Hart and NB's Cocktail Bar and Club were the first to receive Shout-Up! bystander training, which was delivered by Northamptonshire Rape Crisis and funded by Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold. Shout-Up! means certified venues have sexual harassment policies protecting staff and patrons and have a publicly available procedure for dealing with incidents of sexual harassment. More information regarding Shout-Up! can be found by visiting www.shoutup.org/venues



VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON



 **0.2% Violence Against The Person**

[What is Violence Against The Person?](#)
[Report a Neighbourhood Crime](#)

Several initiatives are underway to help improve the safety of women and girls across the county, particularly in the night-time economy. Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold is working alongside West Northamptonshire Council and Northamptonshire Police among others, on projects that are together supported by more than £800,000 from the Home Office Safety of Women at Night Fund and the Safer Street 3 Fund. Schemes have seen West Northamptonshire Council improving lighting and CCTV on the Racecourse and Beckett's Park. The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner will provide training for staff in licenced premises to help them recognise and offer support if someone is being harassed. This also includes the Safer Nights Out van (SNOvan) which was launched in December 2021 and is located in Northampton town centre between 10pm and 5am on Fridays and Saturdays. More information about the SNOvan can be found [here](#).



National Crime and Policing Measures

For the 12 months ending March 2022

Reduce murder and homicide



10

There have been 10 **homicides** within Northamptonshire in the 12 months to December 2021, this is compared to 12 for the baseline period (12 months to June 2019).

How do we compare?

The homicide rate in Northamptonshire is 13.2 per million population vs. 11.3 per million nationally.

Reduce serious violence



655

There have been 655* offences involving a **sharp object** and 108* offences involving a **firearm** within Northamptonshire in the 12 months to December 2021, this is compared to 665 (sharp object) 117 (firearm) for the baseline period (12 months to June 2019).

*Most recent available data



108

How do we compare?

Both the knife crime and gun rates in Northamptonshire are above the national average.

Improve victim satisfaction

74.3%

Overall **victim satisfaction** in the 12 months to January 2022 was 74.3%. This compares to 76.7% in January 2021.

Satisfaction levels among **domestic abuse victims** in the 12 months to January 2022 was 90.2%. This compares to 88.5% in January 2021.

How do we compare?

National comparative information is currently unavailable.

90.2%

Disrupt drug supply and county lines



TBC

Awaiting Home Office guidance and Public Health England figures relating to referrals in to **drug treatment** and **drug-related homicides**.

Reduce neighbourhood crime (residential burglary, personal robbery, theft from the person & vehicle crime)



871

There have been 871 **neighbourhood crimes** within Northamptonshire in the 12 months to March 2022, this is compared to 1,687 for the baseline period (12 months to June 2019).

How do we compare?

The neighbourhood crime rate in Northamptonshire is below the national average, with the county recording the biggest reduction (-48%) nationally.

Tackle cyber crime



TBC

National data is currently unavailable for the confidence in the law enforcement response to **cyber crime**. Awaiting Home Office guidance



Northamptonshire Police Performance Against The National Crime and Policing Measures

Reduce murder and homicide



Over the past few years, Northamptonshire Police has worked hard to recruit additional police officers, including experienced detectives, which has allowed a new focus on neighbourhood policing as a means to prevent and detect crime. A report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in 2021 highlighted improvements in its ability to prevent crime at a local level, with a preventative approach to policing knife crime for example. This is a major change programme, with more work to do, but the force are heading in the right direction.

Disrupt drug supply and county lines



Serious and organised crime such as county lines and child exploitation is a priority for Northamptonshire Police. The Force have recently coordinated in a range of activities designed to disrupt and bring to justice those involved in county lines drug dealing. A recent example saw the seizure of a drugs haul of £78 million being seized by officers from Northamptonshire Police towards the end of 2021. The Class A drugs were discovered in Brackmills, Northampton and is the largest haul in the Forces history.

Reduce serious violence



Northamptonshire Police continues its proactive campaign to remove weapons from the streets. A new countywide campaign called Operation Sceptre has been launched. The campaign includes engagement with people in local communities, hotspot patrols, weapons sweeps, use of the knife arch and knife amnesties. Warrants are being executed, as well as the use of covert tactics involving plain clothes officers.

Reduce neighbourhood crime (residential burglary, personal robbery, theft from the person & vehicle crime)



The latest national data shows Northamptonshire Police recording a 48% reduction in all neighbourhood crime, which is the largest reduction seen in the country. Over the past 2 years, residential burglary in particular has seen a 48% reduction thanks to the help of local campaigns such as Operation Crooked, which ensures that every burglary victim in Northamptonshire is guaranteed a visit from a police officer and the campaign has also seen notable improvements to the quality of investigations and to the forensic process.

Improve victim satisfaction



Northamptonshire Police run a number of surveys to gain insight around public and victims' views on local policing services. They continue to strive towards providing the best service possible and to support and engage with victims of crime.

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner continues to provide support and funding for Voice for Victims and Witnesses (VOICE), who provide free and confidential advice for victims and witnesses.

Tackle cyber crime



Cyber crime increased during Covid-19, due to people leaving home less often. The Force have a specialist unit which deals with investigations involving fraud, asset recovery and cyber crimes. The dedicated team follow up and advise on all cyber crimes, including interviewing and dealing with young people who are at risk of engaging in cyber crime.

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Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel

8th September 2022

Office of the Northamptonshire Police Fire & Crime Commissioner

HMICFRS Inspection – NFRS Outcomes

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue service. We now assess and report on the efficiency, effectiveness and people of the 44 fire and rescue services in England.
- 1.2 In their first inspection report HMICFRS noted that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service required improvements in a number of areas. For example, the service required improvement to its effectiveness. Its response to emergencies is inadequate. It required improvement to how it:
- prevents fires and other risks;
 - protects the public through fire regulation; and
 - responds to national risks.

However, HMICFRS judged the service to be good at understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies.

- 1.3 Another area of improvement identified was the service's efficiency and in particular, making use of resources and in making the service affordable.
- 1.4 Finally HMICFRS concluded that the service required improvement to the way it looks after its people. It was inadequate at getting the right people with the right skills and required improvement to how it ensures fairness and promotes diversity and how it manages performance and develops leaders. They did acknowledge that they service was good at promoting the right values and culture.
- 1.5 Overall, HMICFRS concluded that they would like to see improvements in the year ahead.

2. **HMICFRS Inspection 2022**

- 2.1 A full inspection of the service was carried out earlier this year which looked in detail at work across three categories – effectiveness, efficiency, and people.

The inspection found that there had been major improvements in the Service's effectiveness at responding to and preventing fires and protecting the public through regulation. In their report, the Inspectors reported that they were "pleased to see the service has made significant progress since the 2018 inspection in how effectively and efficiently it keeps people safe and secure from fires and other risks."

- 2.2 These areas of work were individually graded as 'Good', and the Service received a 'Good' grading across the board for its operational effectiveness. An overview of the inspection can be found at appendix A and a copy of the full report is included at Appendix B.

3. Effectiveness

- 3.1 Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good compared to requiring improvement following its 2018/19 assessment.

- 3.2 HMICRFS noted that they were encouraged to see that the service has responded well to the areas for improvement they identified in their first inspection and that there has been a positive direction of travel.

- 3.3 Areas of positive work identified by HMICRFS include:

- The development of an effective integrated risk management plan (IRMP) which uses data and intelligence to identify a range of risks and it describes how it will mitigate them. NFRS now has effective processes in place to gather and disseminate risk information throughout the organisation.
- The allocation of more resources to its prevention function allowing it to mitigate the risks it has identified. NFRS has evaluated its methodology for conducting home fire safety checks and adapted this to better target the highest risk in its communities. The service has effective relationships with a range of partner organisations which allow it to safeguard vulnerable people and collaboratively reduce the number of fires and other emergencies.
- NFRS have undertaken a detailed review of its risk-based inspection programme (RBIP) to make sure this is more proportional. NFRS now targets its activity at premises that present the highest risk. It has also responded to their last inspection by improving the way it engages informally with businesses to make sure they comply with fire safety legislation.
- NFRS has taken appropriate action to address HMICRFS's cause of concern about its response capability. It now has sufficient resources available to give an emergency response in line with its own performance

standards. It has extensively reviewed these standards to make sure available resources meet risk and demand.

- HMICFRS found improvements in the NFRS's capability to respond to major and multi-agency incidents. It has established effective plans to respond to incidents and it tests these plans regularly with other agencies and fire and rescue services. Staff now have a better understanding of Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) principles, although HMICFRS still found that not all staff understand their role in responding to marauding terrorist attack incidents.

4. Efficiency

4.1 Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good compared to required improvement following its 2018/19 assessment.

4.2 Areas of positive work identified by HMICFRS include:

- NFRS has made significant progress in improving its efficiency. The change in governance and additional support from central government has allowed it to stabilise and secure its financial position, both now and in the future. It has successfully established an adequate level of reserves and can demonstrate a balanced budget over the duration of its medium-term financial plan (MTFP).
- NFRS now has a clear rationale when allocating resources to its prevention, protection and response functions. This is clearly linked to risks identified in its IRMP. The service then uses a strong performance management framework to ensure these resources perform efficiently against objectives in the IRMP.
- The governance change has actively introduced new opportunities for collaboration. These have given the service the capacity and capability it needs to modernise the organisation. A joint enabling services function with Northamptonshire Police now provides functions including fleet, estates and information and communications technology (ICT). HMICFRS did note that NFRS should make sure it comprehensively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits of this collaboration.
- HMICFRS did find that the service's ICT infrastructure is not fit for purpose and is significantly hampering staff productivity. However, NFRS has plans in place to address this, but it should make sure this continues to be an important priority.

5. People

5.1 In its latest report, HMICFRS found that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at looking after its people. It was noted the

NFRS has taken some action to respond to the areas HMICFRS identified in their first inspection, but it still needs to make significant improvements.

- 5.2 HMICFRS did acknowledge that senior leaders show strong strategic intent to improve the culture, embed values and promote EDI, however the Inspectors concluded that the service isn't making enough progress in this area. They found that it is failing to implement the objectives outlined in its strategies to make sure it effectively looks after its people. Staff widely misunderstand the benefits of a diverse workforce. Despite a high proportion of staff members understanding the service's values, there are still examples of behaviours that are contrary to those values.
- 5.2 Whilst NFRS has a range of appropriate policies and procedures to manage workforce concerns such as grievances and disciplines, Inspectors concluded that it inconsistently applies these policies and there are managers throughout the organisation who don't understand them.
- 5.3 Since the last last inspection, NFRS has made some improvements to its promotion process. The inspectors found that this is now more structured and has improved staff members' understanding and perception of fairness. However, they felt it could still take more action to identify and develop high-potential leaders to meet its long-term needs.
- 5.4 The Inspectors also noted that NFRS has positively responded to thier cause of concern about its processes to provide, record and monitor risk-critical training. It now has appropriate systems in place to make sure skills are maintained and that there is effective corporate oversight of this process.

6. Next Steps








- 6.1 I am pleased that the independent assessment from HMICFRS confirms what I believed was the case – that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is providing a much-improved service in the way they keep the county safe. Colleagues in the Fire and Rescue Service shuld be proud of how much they have improved, and I always believed that moving under my governance, with increased opportunities for joint working, would enable Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service to deliver the best possible service to the people of this county.
- 6.2 I am disappointed by what HMICFRS had to say about values and inclusion and there is clearly much work that needs to be done in that area. Work is already underway to address the concerns raised in the report. For example, it is my expectation that plans are put in place to improve the culture as soon as possible. This will be kept under constant review through the Accountability Board process and it will be a priority for the incoming new Chief Fire Officer when he takes up his post later in the year.





6.3 I will also be looking for opportunities for further collaboration with Northamptonshire Police as both organisations work to build trust and confidence across the board.







7. Recommendations

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

Stephen Mold

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 Effectiveness	 Good	Requires improvement
Understanding fires and other risks	 Good	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	 Good	Requires improvement
Protecting the public through fire regulation	 Good	Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	 Good	Inadequate
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	 Good	Requires improvement

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 Efficiency	 Good	Requires improvement
Making best use of resources	 Good	Requires improvement
Future affordability	 Good	Requires improvement

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 People	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Promoting the right values and culture	 Requires improvement	Good
Getting the right people with the right skills	 Good	Inadequate
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement

Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22

Effectiveness, efficiency and people

An inspection of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service



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About this inspection

This is our third inspection of fire and rescue services in England. We first inspected Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service in November 2018, publishing a report with our findings in June 2019 on the service's effectiveness and efficiency and how it looks after its people. Our second inspection, in autumn 2020, considered how the service was responding to the pandemic. This inspection considers for a second time the service's effectiveness, efficiency and people.

In this round of inspections of all 44 fire and rescue services in England, we answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

This report sets out our inspection findings for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service.

What inspection judgments mean

Our categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.








Good is our expected graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant [national operational guidance](#) or standards.




If the service exceeds what we expect for good, we will judge it as outstanding.




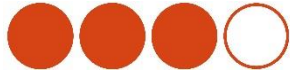


If we find shortcomings in the service, we will judge it as requires improvement.

If there are serious, critical or systemic failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of inadequate.

Overview

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 Effectiveness	 Good	Requires improvement
Understanding fires and other risks	 Good	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	 Good	Requires improvement
Protecting the public through fire regulation	 Good	Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	 Good	Inadequate
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	 Good	Requires improvement

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 Efficiency	 Good	Requires improvement
Making best use of resources	 Good	Requires improvement
Future affordability	 Good	Requires improvement

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 People	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Promoting the right values and culture	 Requires improvement	Good
Getting the right people with the right skills	 Good	Inadequate
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement

HM Inspector's summary

It was a pleasure to visit Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, and I am grateful for the positive and constructive way that the service engaged with our inspection.

We were pleased to see that the service has made significant progress since our 2018 inspection in how effectively and efficiently it keeps people safe and secure from fires and other risks. It has made clear use of our recommendations from the last inspection to improve the service it gives the public. But there are areas where the service still needs to improve, particularly how well it looks after its people.

My principal findings from our assessments of the service over the past year are as follows:

- The service has positively responded to our [cause of concern](#) that it didn't have adequate resources available to respond effectively to emergencies. It now consistently makes sure enough fire engines are available and senior managers oversee this. It has also improved the way it uses its prevention and protection functions to keep the public safe and target resources at those most at risk.
- The service has used the change in governance arrangements to stabilise its financial position, both now and in the future. It has removed significant financial instability and has clear plans in place to provide an affordable fire and rescue service, while establishing a [reserves](#) strategy and capital funding to make essential investments.
- The service and its leadership team have a clear strategic intent to embed values and promote equality, diversity and inclusion. However, I am concerned to find that in many areas this is not translating into effective actions that people throughout the organisation understand and support. We have identified several areas where the service needs to improve the way it looks after its people. It has, however, fully resolved our cause of concern from 2018 where we identified it was not monitoring or recording risk-critical training.

Overall, I commend the service on the changes it has made and expect it to continue working to resolve the further areas for improvement we have identified. We will continue to assess progress through our usual monitoring arrangements.



Roy Wilsher

HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Service in numbers



Response

Northamptonshire

England

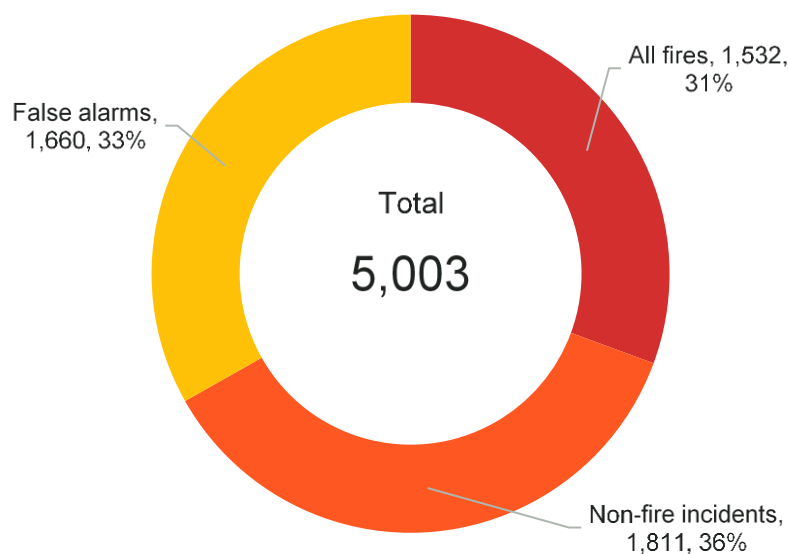
Incidents attended per 1,000 population Year ending 30 June 2021	6.61	9.36
Home fire safety checks carried out by fire and rescue service per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	2.31	4.47
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises Year ending 31 March 2021	4.51	1.70
Average availability of pumps Year ending 31 March 2021	76.6%	86.4%



Cost

Firefighter cost per person Year ending 31 March 2021	£19.88	£23.72
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Incidents attended in the year to 30 June 2021

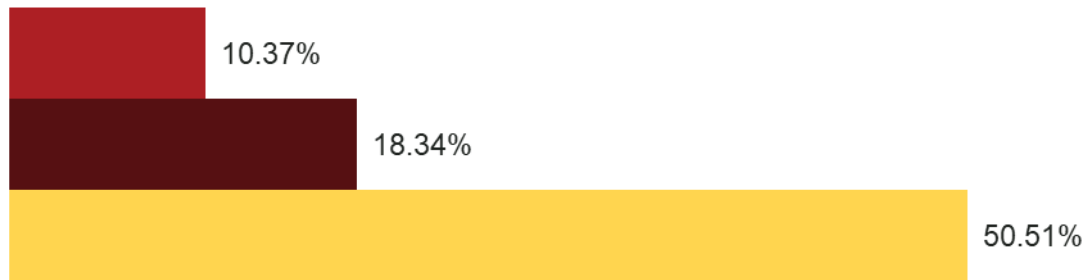




Five-year change in total workforce 2016 to 2021	-10.49%	-1.60%
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	0.57	0.62
Percentage of firefighters who are wholetime Year ending 31 March 2021	55.5%	64.4%

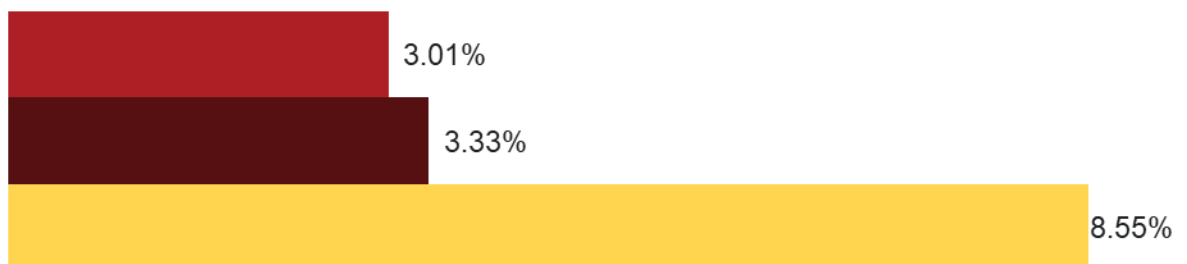
Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are female as at 31 March 2021

■ Firefighters ■ Workforce ■ Local population



Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are from ethnic minority backgrounds as at 31 March 2021

■ Firefighters ■ Workforce ■ Local population



For more information on data and analysis throughout this report, please view the [‘About the data’ section of our website](#).

Effectiveness



How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



Good

Summary

An effective fire and rescue service will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks its community faces. It should target its fire prevention and protection activities to those who are at greatest risk from fire and make sure fire safety legislation is being enforced. And when the public calls for help, it should respond promptly with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively. Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

We are encouraged to see that the service has responded well to the areas for improvement we identified in our first inspection. Overall, we have seen a positive direction of travel.

The service has developed an effective [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#). It uses data and [intelligence](#) to identify a range of risks and it describes how it will mitigate them. It has effective processes in place to gather and disseminate risk information throughout the organisation.

Since our last inspection, the service has allocated more resources to its prevention function. This is now allowing it to mitigate the risks it has identified. It has evaluated its methodology for conducting [home fire safety checks](#) and adapted this to better target the highest risk in its communities. The service has effective relationships with a range of partner organisations. These allow it to [safeguard vulnerable people](#) and collaboratively reduce the number of fires and other emergencies.

In relation to protection, the service has undertaken a detailed review of its risk-based inspection programme (RBIP) to make sure this is more proportional. It now targets its activity at premises that present the highest risk. It has also responded to our last inspection by improving the way it engages informally with businesses to make sure they comply with fire safety legislation.

The service has taken appropriate action to address our [cause of concern](#) about its response capability. It now has sufficient resources available to give an emergency

response in line with its own performance standards. It has extensively reviewed these standards to make sure available resources meet risk and demand.

We found improvements in the service's capability to respond to major and multi-agency incidents. It has established effective plans to respond to incidents and it tests these plans regularly with other agencies and fire and rescue services. Staff now have a better understanding of [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles \(JESIP\)](#) principles, although we still found that not all staff understand their role in responding to marauding terrorist attack incidents.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good (2019: Good)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at understanding risk.

Each fire and rescue service should identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks that could affect its communities. Arrangements should be put in place through the service's prevention, protection and response capabilities to prevent or mitigate these risks for the public.

Area for improvement

The service should ensure that consultation is meaningful in influencing its future plans and informing its risk profile.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service uses a wide range of sources to identify risk

The service has assessed an appropriate range of risks and threats after a thorough IRMP planning process. When assessing risk, it has considered relevant information collected from a broad range of internal and external sources and data sets. For example, we were encouraged to see that the service is taking account of significant future housing expansion to adjust its planning assumptions.

The service has also produced the Fire25 document, which sets out a range of other factors that will influence its operating model. This includes recent changes in the local authority structure and guidance produced by the [National Fire Chiefs Council](#).

The service could improve the way it engages with communities to build its risk profile

The service carried out an extensive consultation before publishing its current IRMP, but it didn't sufficiently use the outcomes of this when constructing its IRMP.

At the time of our inspection, the service was consulting on the next version of its IRMP, which it intended to publish in April 2022. We found that the primary consultation method was an online survey promoted through the service's website and social media channels. The service has also conducted several online engagement events with parish councillors from across the county. These methods alone may not allow the service to capture the views of hard-to-reach sections of the community.

The service should ensure it fully considers the outcomes of the consultation in the next version of its IRMP or any subsequent action plans.

The service has an effective IRMP

After assessing relevant risks, the service has recorded its findings in an easily understood IRMP. This plan describes how prevention, protection and response activity is to be effectively resourced to mitigate or reduce the risks and threats the community faces, both now and in the future.

The latest version of the plan includes actions to:

- revise its targeting methodology for home fire safety visits (HFSVs);
- refine its RBIP; and
- provide an emergency response against clearly defined standards and target attendance times.

Three departmental strategies for prevention, protection and response support the IRMP. They explain the service's plans in more detail and include specific outcomes for measuring performance.

The service has good processes in place to share risk information across the organisation

The service routinely collects and updates the information it has about the people, places and threats it has identified as being at greatest risk. This information is readily available for the service's prevention, protection and response staff, which enables it to identify, reduce and mitigate risk effectively. The service holds a twice-weekly 'pacesetter' call involving staff from all departments, where they agree any newly identified risks and plans to mitigate them. This helps ensure a common understanding of risk across the organisation.

The service also communicates information to staff through a range of methods, including email, [mobile data terminals](#) on fire engines and alerts in the service's training software. Where appropriate, it passes risk information on to other organisations such as the police and local authorities.

The service uses local and national learning to inform its understanding of risk

The service records and communicates risk information effectively. It also routinely updates risk assessments and uses feedback from local and national operational activity to inform its planning assumptions.

The service uses its operational assurance board to effectively assess the outcomes of internal debriefs and national learning. It has considered both the Grenfell Tower

fire inquiry and the Manchester Arena inquiry and has developed actions to improve its own capability.

The service has responded proactively to the recommendations and learning from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry

During this round of inspections, we sampled how each fire and rescue service has responded to the recommendations and learning from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has responded positively and proactively to learning from this tragedy.

It has carried out a fire safety audit and collected and passed relevant risk information to its prevention, protection and response teams about buildings identified as high risk and all high-rise buildings within the service area.

The service has introduced new equipment specifically designed for evacuating people from high-rise fires. It has improved its procedures for providing fire survival guidance to 999 callers while communicating the information those callers give them to firefighters at the scene of an incident. It has also tested its high-rise procedures in several large, multi-agency exercises.

Preventing fires and other risks



Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at preventing fires and other risks.

Fire and rescue services must promote fire safety, including giving fire safety advice. To identify people at greatest risk from fire, services should work closely with other organisations in the public and voluntary sector, and with the police and ambulance services. They should provide intelligence and risk information with these other organisations when they identify vulnerability or exploitation.

Area for improvement

The service should ensure that the new ways of working to provide HFSVs are fully understood by staff to best support the targeting of risk.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service's prevention strategy is clearly linked to its IRMP

The service's prevention strategy is clearly linked to the risks identified in its IRMP. It is based on internal and external data, which it uses to determine who is at the greatest risk in its communities and how it will target its activity towards them.

The service works well with relevant organisations on prevention and it passes on relevant information when needed. Information is used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's prevention, protection and response functions. For example, where prevention staff identify specific risks, such as hoarding or an immobile occupier, there is a process to update the [mobilising system](#) in [fire control](#). This ensures those at the address receive an amended response in the event of a fire.

The service has allocated additional resources to its prevention function

During our previous inspection we found that to make savings, the service had reduced its prevention team to seven staff members. This meant it didn't have enough capacity to address the risks it had identified. We are encouraged to find that the service has since taken steps to increase the size of its dedicated prevention team. This includes a post dedicated to supporting the highest-risk cases in liaison with partner organisations.

The effect of the pandemic on the service's prevention activities

We considered how the service had adapted its prevention work during our COVID-19 specific inspection in September 2020. At that time, we found it had adapted its public prevention work appropriately.

Since then, we are encouraged to find that the service resumed prevention activity on a risk-assessed basis and in accordance with national guidance. But at the time of our inspection the service had, based on the re-introduction of COVID-19 restrictions in December 2021, paused much of its prevention activity again. It was continuing to ensure it engaged with very high-risk cases and had a clear plan as to how it would resume activity once restrictions were lifted.

The service has reviewed its prevention activity to make sure it targets those most at risk

Prevention activity is clearly prioritised using a risk-based approach towards people most at risk from fire and other emergencies. We are pleased to see that since our last inspection, the service has developed a new approach to better target its HFSVs. This was introduced in July 2021 and is based on data from a range of sources. The information is presented in 'risk maps', which staff use to target activity in areas that present the greatest risk.

Between July and December 2021, the percentage of completed HFSVs scored to be in high or very high-risk dwellings had increased to 80 percent, compared with 60 percent in 2019/20. We are interested to see if this approach continues to result in effective targeting over a longer period.

The service should make sure staff know how to target risk

Staff told us they have the right skills and confidence to carry out HFSVs. This includes [on-call](#) firefighters, who we found in our last inspection were not engaged in carrying out prevention activity. These checks cover an appropriate range of hazards that can put vulnerable people at greater risk from fire and other emergencies.

But we were disappointed to find that not all operational staff know how to apply the newly introduced targeting methodology. The service should make sure staff understand this so it can fully realise the intended benefits.

Staff can confidently respond to safeguarding concerns

Staff we interviewed told us about occasions when they had identified safeguarding problems. They were familiar with how to identify vulnerable people and could explain the processes to make referrals to other organisations. Prevention staff responsible for the most complex cases complete joint training with the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board.

All member organisations of this board recently completed a self-assessment and assurance audit to verify independently if they were meeting the needs of vulnerable people. We heard from external partners that the service engaged fully in this process and achieved a good level of compliance.

The service works well with partner organisations

The service works with a wide range of other organisations such as Northamptonshire Police and local community safety partnerships to prevent fires and other emergencies. During our inspection we spoke to a range of partner organisations, who all talked positively of the relationship they have with the service.

We found good evidence that it routinely refers people at greatest risk to other organisations that may be better able to meet their needs. These organisations include social services and healthcare bodies. Arrangements are in place to receive referrals from others such as the East Midlands Ambulance Service. We found evidence that the service consistently acts appropriately on the referrals it receives, where appropriate giving enhanced support through its complex case officer.

The service routinely exchanges information with other public sector organisations about people and groups at greatest risk. It uses the information to challenge planning assumptions and target prevention activity. For example, the service works with Northamptonshire Police to share with each other information about [domestic abuse](#) and incidents of arson (these risks being linked in some cases).

The service has increased its focus on road safety

Since our last inspection, the service has improved its focus on road safety through enhanced co-operation with the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance. Several other members of the alliance told us the service now proactively engages with partners, and that data is used to develop collaborative strategies to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the county's roads.

The service works well with partners to tackle fire-setting

The service has a range of suitable and effective interventions to target and educate people of different ages who show signs of fire-setting behaviour. It is integrated into the Northamptonshire Arson Task Force, a joint body that employs staff from both the service and Northamptonshire Police. They jointly carry out a range of interventions, including bespoke arson risk visits and a juvenile fire-setter programme.

The service is a leading partner in the tri-service Emergency Services Cadets scheme, where 25 percent of places are reserved for young people from under-privileged backgrounds. This is intended to give young people activities that divert them from [anti-social behaviour](#) and contribute to the reduction of arson.

The service is good at evaluating its prevention activity

In our last inspection we identified that the service wasn't effectively evaluating its prevention activities. We are pleased to find that the service has since developed a tool for evaluating its prevention work, both internally and with partners. It measures how effective its work is so it knows what works, and so its communities get prevention activity that meets their needs.

We saw evidence of the service effectively evaluating relationships with its partners to make sure they achieve the desired outcomes. It has used this process well to improve outcomes for the public. It also evaluates its engagement with specific individuals who present complex needs. It shares this learning with its safeguarding management group to identify any areas for improvement.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at protecting the public through fire regulation.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in certain buildings and, when necessary, require building owners to comply with fire safety legislation. Each service decides how many assessments it does each year. But it must have a locally determined, risk-based inspection programme for enforcing the legislation.

Area for improvement

The service should ensure its RBIP uses a systemised methodology that can be applied consistently in the future.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service has a protection strategy that is linked to its IRMP

The service's protection strategy is clearly linked to the risk it has identified in its IRMP. It outlines several ways in which it will address risk in its communities. This includes both a RBIP that proactively targets risk, and a broad range of other activity to respond to public concerns and emerging risks.

Staff across the service are involved in this activity, with information effectively exchanged as needed. For example, the service has recently piloted a new approach to using operational crews to inspect [houses of multiple occupation](#). Information is in turn used to adjust planning assumptions and to direct activity between the service's protection, prevention and response functions. This means resources are properly aligned to risk.

The effect of the pandemic on the service's protection activities

We considered how the service had adapted its protection activity during our COVID-19 specific inspection in September 2020. At that time, we found it had adapted its protection work well. The revised approach of using remote audits to inspect premises has let the service carry out more audits than it would usually be able to. It has continued to re-introduce face-to-face protection activity on a risk-assessed basis and in accordance with national guidance.

The service has reviewed its strategy to better align activity to risk

In our last inspection we found that the service's RBIP was not proportionate. The service could also not undertake it with the resources it had available. We are pleased to find that the service has since completed a detailed review of its RBIP to make sure it focuses on the highest-risk buildings.

Its new approach has reduced the number of high-risk premises from more than 5,000 premises to 1,721. It reviews a range of internal and external data to determine which premises should be included, and it reviews this regularly.

But we do have some concerns that the arrangements in place to determine the inclusion of premises are over-reliant on the professional judgment of a small number of experienced protection officers. The service should make sure it designs systems to ensure the current arrangements can continue consistently in the future.

The service has the required resources to provide protection activity

The service has enough qualified protection staff to meet the requirements of the service's RBIP. It has the capacity to audit all premises in its RBIP on a three-yearly basis and undertake all other activity identified in its IRMP. This enables the service to provide the range of audit and enforcement activity needed, both now and in the future.

Staff get the right training and work to appropriate accreditation. Protection officers complete a [Level 4 fire safety diploma](#), which meets the requirements in National Fire Chiefs Council guidelines.

The service has carried out audits at all high-rise buildings

The service doesn't have any buildings in its area that use the type of cladding found on Grenfell Tower. It has, however, audited all high-rise buildings in the county as part of its response to the tragedy. It makes information it gathers during these audits available to response teams and control operators, helping them respond more effectively in an emergency.

The service completes audits in a systematic and consistent way

We reviewed a range of audits of different premises across the service. This includes audits:

- as part of the service's RBIP;
- after fires at premises where fire safety legislation applied; and
- where enforcement action had been taken.

The audits we reviewed were completed to a high standard in a consistent, systematic way, and in line with the service's policies. Relevant information from the audits is made available to operational teams and control room operators.

The service quality assures protection activities in a proportionate way. It reviews staff activities to make sure they meet the required standard.

The service evaluates its protection activity

We found evidence of the service continually evaluating its RBIP to ensure it continues to inspect the highest-risk premises. It also evaluates specific activities. For example, in 2020/21 the service trialled using operational staff to inspect houses of multiple occupation. At the end of a trial period, we found evidence of the service evaluating its approach and identifying learning that would improve the way it provides services in the future.

The service should ensure it has the capability to prosecute

We are encouraged to find that the service consistently uses a range of enforcement powers, but we are concerned that they haven't undertaken any recorded prosecutions. This may result in staff not having the knowledge and skills they need to successfully prosecute in the future. In the year to 31 March 2021, the service issued 15 informal notifications, 18 enforcement notices and 6 prohibition notices.

During our inspection we reviewed data and files for several enforcement and prohibition cases. We found that the service completes subsequent visits to ensure premises are taking sufficient action to improve compliance. Protection officers give 24/7 cover to support any out-of-hours enforcement requirements.

The service works closely with other organisations to regulate fire safety

The service works closely with other organisations to regulate fire safety and routinely exchanges risk information with them. Examples we found during our inspection include:

- a joined-up approach with Northamptonshire Police to inspect and manage compliance in licensed premises;
- effective relationships with local authority housing teams to inspect the large number of houses of multiple occupation in the county; and
- work with the Health and Safety Executive to undertake enforcement action at a construction site that was illegally being used for sleeping purposes.

The service responds to building consultations on time

The service responds to all building consultations on time, so consistently meets its statutory responsibility to comment on fire safety arrangements at new and altered buildings. In the year to 31 March 2021, it responded to 99.6 percent of consultations within the required timescales.

The service has improved the way it engages with businesses

In our last inspection we found that the service didn't engage effectively with local businesses on an informal level. We are pleased to find that the service has taken action to improve this.

It has developed a range of accessible self-help tools for landlords and business owners to help them comply with relevant legislation. These are published on the service's website, with contact details for the protection team. The service may wish to think about expanding the reach of this content through social media channels or engaging with businesses in person.

The service takes action to reduce unwanted fire signals

An effective risk-based approach is in place to manage the number of unwanted fire signals. The service has robust procedures to challenge calls in its control room before it mobilises a fire engine. And it has clear policies for working with premises that repeatedly generate false alarms. It gets fewer calls because of this work.

In the year ending 31 March 2021, the service didn't attend 63 percent of all alarm activations it was notified of. This is significantly higher than the England average of 37 percent. Fewer unwanted calls means fire engines are available to respond to a genuine incident rather than responding to a false one. It also reduces the risk to the public if fewer fire engines travel at high speed on the roads.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good (2019: Inadequate)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies.

Fire and rescue services must be able to respond to a range of incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies in their area.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure its mobile data terminals are reliable so firefighters can readily access up-to-date risk information.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Response resources are in the right places to meet risk and demand

The service's response strategy is linked to the risks identified in its IRMP. Its fire engines and response staff, as well as its working patterns, are designed and located to enable the service to respond flexibly to fires and other emergencies with the appropriate resources. The service completed a detailed fire cover review in 2019. This has allowed it to better understand how many fire engines it needs and assure itself they are in the right places to best respond to emergencies.

The service has improved the availability of its fire engines

In our inspection of 2018, we identified a cause of concern that the service consistently didn't have available its minimum number of fire engines. There was also a lack of oversight as senior managers were not routinely told when this happened.

We are pleased to find the service has taken significant action to address this. It has increased the number of [wholetime firefighters](#) to give additional support to on-call stations. And it uses overtime where necessary to maintain the optimum number of fire engines. The service holds a twice-weekly 'pacesetter' call, where senior managers review resource availability and agree actions to make sure the service maintains coverage.

To support its response strategy, the service aims to have 18 fire engines available on 100 percent of occasions. The service consistently meets this standard and uses its fire cover model to make sure these fire engines are in the most suitable locations. In the year to 31 March 2021, the service maintained overall availability for its fire engines of 76.6 percent. This results in an average of 21 appliances being available.

Improved availability is resulting in better response times

There are no national response standards of performance for the public. But the service has set out its own response standards in its IRMP. It aims to respond to all incidents within 10 minutes of receiving a 999 call.

In the year to 31 March 2021, the service's average response time was 10 minutes and 17 seconds, so not meeting its own target by a small margin. But Home Office data shows that in the same period, the service's average response time to [primary fires](#) was 9 minutes and 39 seconds. This is in line with the average for significantly rural services. Since 2018/19, when we identified our cause of concern about fire engine availability, response times have continued to improve.

Staff have a good understanding of how to command incidents safely

The service has trained incident commanders, who are assessed regularly and properly. It has an effective system to ensure they have regular training and it re-assesses their command competence every two years. This enables the service to safely, assertively and effectively manage the whole range of incidents that it could face, from small and routine ones to complex multi-agency incidents.

As part of our inspection, we interviewed incident commanders from across the service. Those we interviewed are familiar with risk assessing, decision-making and recording information at incidents in line with national best practice, as well as the JESIP. Some staff told us that although they had received training on the subject, they were unsure how to apply [operational discretion](#) at an incident. The service should consider how it can give more guidance in this area.

The service is making good progress to ensure its operational procedures are aligned to [national operational guidance](#).

Fire control is involved in the service's command, exercise and assurance activity, as well as debriefing

We are pleased to see the service's control staff are integrated into the service's command, training and exercise programme. Control staff follow a continuous training programme, which is in line with national competencies. They are regularly involved in multi-agency exercises. Following exercises or larger incidents, control staff can contribute to operational learning through the service's debriefing system.

Fire control can give fire survival guidance to multiple callers

The control room staff we interviewed are confident they could provide fire survival guidance to many callers simultaneously. This was identified as learning for fire services after the Grenfell Tower fire. A recent high-rise exercise tested their ability to manage multiple fire survival calls and share information with incident commanders. Staff told us they were confident in using this process.

Control has good systems in place to exchange real-time risk information with incident commanders, other responding partners and other supporting fire and rescue services. Maintaining good situational awareness enables the service to communicate effectively with the public, providing them with accurate and tailored advice. Information on the specific evacuation policy for each high-rise building in the county is clearly displayed in the mobilising system.

The service's mobilising software is fully integrated with the control room of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service. This allows the Warwickshire service to seamlessly handle an increase in call volume with no delay to mobilising or to communicating information.

The quality of risk information is good but it is not always easily accessible

We sampled a range of risk information, including what is in place for firefighters responding to incidents at high-risk, high-rise buildings and what information is held by fire control.

The information we reviewed was up to date, detailed and in a format that is easy to access and understand. But staff told us the hardware used to provide this information on mobile data terminals in fire engines is often unreliable. On occasions during our inspection, we also found difficulties in accessing risk information. The service must make sure mobile data terminals are reliable.

The risk information viewed by inspectors was subject to input from the service's prevention, protection and response functions when appropriate.

The service has improved the way it evaluates operational performance

During our inspection in 2018, we identified that the service should make sure it has an effective system to help staff use learning and debriefing to improve operational response. This was an area for improvement. We are pleased to find that the service has taken action to address this. It has consulted with other fire and rescue services to identify best practice and implement a new system for debriefing.

As part of this inspection, we reviewed a range of emergency incidents and training events. These included large fires, exercises and a case of wide-area flooding, which was declared a major incident. We are pleased to see the service routinely follows its policies to make sure staff command incidents in line with operational guidance. We found extensive evidence of actions being identified in debriefs and the service responding to improve the way it serves the public.

Encouragingly, most staff spoke positively of the new system and told us they usually receive a timely response acknowledging any suggested improvements or learning they submit.

The service is effective at keeping the public informed about incidents

The service has good systems in place to inform the public about ongoing incidents and help keep them safe during and after incidents. It uses various social media channels to issue live updates about significant incidents. A 24/7 arrangement through Northamptonshire Police means communications continue out of hours.

The service has additional processes in place with the [local resilience forum \(LRF\)](#) to share information about major incidents. It also gives senior operational commanders bespoke training on media liaison.

Responding to major and multi-agency incidents



Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

All fire and rescue services must be able to respond effectively to multi-agency and cross-border incidents. This means working with other fire and rescue services (known as intraoperability) and emergency services (known as interoperability).

Area for improvement

The service should make sure it is well prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a terrorist incident, and its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service has assessed community risks likely to need a multi-agency response

The service has effectively anticipated and considered the reasonably foreseeable risks and threats it may face. These risks are listed in both local and national risk registers as part of its IRMP planning. Examples include wide-scale flooding, major fires and flu pandemics.

Firefighters have access to risk information from neighbouring services. This is provided through mobile data terminals on fire engines and now includes premises up to 10 kilometres from the county borders. This addresses an area for improvement we identified in our 2018 inspection.

The service has plans in place to respond to multi-agency incidents

We reviewed the arrangements the service has in place to respond to different major incidents. The service is integrated into a joint operations team, which also employs staff from Northamptonshire Police. Together, they prepare plans for both agencies to respond to major incidents and risks in the service area.

The service has good arrangements in place, including a comprehensive major incident procedure, which staff understand well. We found they know their responsibilities, including how to request specialist resources and national assets if needed.

We saw evidence of the service using its major incident procedures effectively during a wide-scale flooding incident in December 2020. The service worked well with other agencies to put in place an effective command structure and facilitated a multi-agency debrief to identify learning.

Not all staff understand how to respond to marauding terrorist attacks

Since our last inspection, the service has revised its procedures to respond to a marauding terrorist attack. These reflect revised national guidance. But we found that not all staff understand their responsibilities in relation to the procedures. The service should ensure all operational staff are prepared and trained well enough for this type of incident.

The service works effectively with other fire services

The service supports other fire and rescue services responding to emergency incidents. Its joint fire control system with Warwickshire allows seamless cross-border mobilising in this area of the county, making sure incidents receive the quickest response. It is intraoperable with these services and can form part of a multi-agency response.

The service has established processes in place to resource and deploy national assets in the event of a major incident elsewhere in the country. We found evidence of the service robustly testing the deployment procedures for its mass decontamination unit as part of a national resilience assurance team visit.

The service has a structured cross-border exercise plan

In our last inspection, we identified that the service needed to arrange a programme of cross-border exercises. We are encouraged to see this is now in place and the service has an exercise plan with neighbouring fire and rescue services. This means they can work together effectively to keep the public safe. The plan includes the risks of major events, when the service could foreseeably give support or ask for help from neighbouring services.

Between April 2021 and January 2022, the service completed 21 multi-agency exercises, ten of which involved staff from neighbouring fire and rescue services.

Although we have seen evidence of the service using a structured plan to co-ordinate this programme, it should consider how to make sure the staff involved in these exercises are those who are most likely to respond to incidents with other fire services. Some staff who work close to county borders, particularly at on-call stations, told us they have little or no experience of exercising with other services.

Incident commanders have been trained in and understand JESIP

The incident commanders we interviewed had been trained in and were familiar with the JESIP.

The service gave us strong evidence that it consistently follows these principles. Examples include:

- using [national inter-agency liaison officers](#) to support commanders with tactical advice during multi-agency incidents;
- communication procedures that can be adopted during major incidents, for example, joint airwave channels; and
- using nationally recognised messaging protocols (that is, messages that all emergency services and partner agencies understand).

The service is an active member of the LRF

The service has good arrangements in place to respond to emergencies with other partners that make up the Northamptonshire LRF.

The service is a valued partner. The chief fire officer is the chair of the LRF and leads both the strategic and tactical sub-groups. These sub-groups have had frequent meetings during the pandemic to support an effective county-wide response. The service takes part in regular training events with other members of the LRF and uses the learning to develop planning assumptions about responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

The service uses national learning to inform planning

The service keeps itself up to date with [national operational learning](#) updates from other fire services and joint operational learning from other blue light partners, such as the police service and ambulance trusts. The service has an operational assurance board, which oversees this process. The board makes sure the service uses learning to inform planning assumptions both internally and with other partner agencies.

Efficiency



How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



Good

Summary

An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and use its resources properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to the risks and priorities identified in its [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#). It should try to achieve value for money and keep costs down without compromising public safety. It should make the best possible use of its resources to achieve better results for the public. Plans should be based on robust and realistic assumptions about income and costs. Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

We are pleased to find that since our last inspection, the service has made significant progress in improving its efficiency. The change in governance and additional support from central government has allowed it to stabilise and secure its financial position, both now and in the future. It has successfully established an adequate level of [reserves](#) and can demonstrate a balanced budget over the duration of its [medium-term financial plan \(MTFP\)](#).

The service has a clear rationale when allocating resources to its prevention, protection and response functions. This is clearly linked to risks identified in its IRMP. The service then uses a strong performance management framework to ensure these resources perform efficiently against objectives in the IRMP.

The governance change has actively introduced new opportunities for collaboration. These have given the service the capacity and capability it needs to modernise the organisation. A joint enabling services function with Northamptonshire Police now provides functions including fleet, estates and information and communications technology (ICT). The service should make sure it comprehensively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits of this collaboration.

Notably, we found that the service's ICT infrastructure is not fit for purpose and is significantly hampering staff productivity. The service has plans in place to address this, but it should make sure this continues to be an important priority.

Making best use of resources



Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making best use of its resources.

Fire and rescue services should manage their resources properly and appropriately, aligning them with the services' risks and statutory responsibilities. Services should make best possible use of resources to achieve the best results for the public.

The service's budget for 2022/23 is £27.092m. This is a 7.25 percent increase from the previous financial year.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Allocation of resources is linked directly to the IRMP

We are encouraged to see the improvements the service has made since our last inspection. The service's financial and workforce plans, including allocating staff to prevention, protection and response, now reflect and are consistent with the risks and priorities identified in the IRMP. For example:

- the allocation of resources to the response function is clearly linked to the outcomes of the service's 2019 fire cover review;
- the increase in prevention resources has been supported by business cases that outline why this is necessary to meet the risks identified in the IRMP; and
- the provision of protection resources reflects the demand and activity detailed in the IRMP.

We found evidence of the service's [fire control](#) being inadequately resourced. It frequently operates with less than the required number of staff. But the service had recently taken steps to address this with improved succession planning. It should make sure it maintains these improvements.

Plans are built on sound scenarios and use a [zero-based budgeting](#) principle to allocate resources based on current need, as opposed to assuming previous spending should continue. These plans help make sure the service is sustainable. And they are underpinned by financial controls that reduce the risk of misusing public money. This is supported by external audits, which identified no areas of concern.

The service monitors performance effectively

We are pleased to see that the service's arrangements for managing performance clearly link resource use to the IRMP and the service's strategic priorities. We found that since our last inspection, the service has introduced an effective performance framework, which staff understand well. Teams throughout the organisation use scorecards to report their work against specific targets. Managers at all levels of the service told us the scorecard system helps them make sure their team's time is as productive as possible and meets the organisation's objectives.

The service is taking some other steps to make sure the workforce's time is productive. This includes implementing new ways of working. For example, it has introduced a new crewing model at two fire stations, which is designed to better support on-call availability.

In our 2018 inspection, we identified that the service needed to make sure it had clear and robust processes to manage staff overtime. We are pleased to find it has now introduced effective measures to make sure it only uses overtime when it is needed to meet operational requirements.

Poor ICT infrastructure hampers the productivity of staff

Throughout our inspection, staff told us their productivity was significantly reduced by the available IT systems and hardware. This is particularly the case at the service's fire stations. Examples include:

- software applications that haven't been sufficiently updated, resulting in staff developing time-consuming workarounds that also create single points of failure;
- a lack of computers fitted with video conferencing software, meaning staff are less able to access training courses; and
- using paper-based recording systems, which need to be duplicated to communicate information to others in the organisation.

We acknowledge that the service has an ambitious plan to develop the way it provides technology and IT through its joint enabling services function. It should make sure it prioritises this work to improve its teams' output and productivity.

The service collaborates extensively to improve its efficiency

Since our last inspection, and following the change of governance, the service has entered an extensive collaboration with Northamptonshire Police and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Named 'enabling services', it provides joint back-office functions across five areas. These are:

- finance;
- fleet and equipment;
- ICT;
- estates; and
- human resources.

These collaborative teams have been introduced gradually over the last two years and are all supported by detailed business cases and strategies, which outline how they will result in efficiencies and improve the effectiveness of the service.

We found that the service has plans to introduce performance indicators in April 2022 to measure the output of these teams. It should make sure it implements this process so it comprehensively monitors, reviews and evaluates the outcomes of the collaboration.

Collaborative working, particularly with the police, is also evident across prevention, protection and response functions. There are several joint teams, which include staff from both organisations, all aiming to improve outcomes for the public of Northamptonshire.

The service has good business continuity arrangements

We are encouraged to see the improvements the service has made since the last inspection. The service has good continuity arrangements in place for areas where threats and risks are considered high. These threats and risks are regularly reviewed and tested so that staff are aware of the arrangements and their associated responsibilities. For example, it has a clear plan outlining how it would carry out its statutory functions in the event of industrial action. It also has robust procedures should its fire control room become compromised. It regularly reviews and tests these procedures.

The service takes some action to ensure value for money

During our inspection we found some evidence of the service working to improve value for money and reduce non-pay costs. Examples include:

- promoting better scrutiny by improving the way it governs its procurement process and reducing the thresholds for authorising spend;
- introducing a new software tool to better monitor vehicle use and fuel consumption; and
- jointly procuring external data with Northamptonshire Police to inform risk identification and activity in its prevention and protection functions.

The service could do more to demonstrate value for money. For example, we found no evidence that the service uses national and local [benchmarking](#).

Some of the savings and efficiencies made under the service's former governance arrangements had a disproportionate effect on operational performance. The governance change has increased the funding available to the service, allowing it to improve the level of service it gives the public.

Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future



Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making the service affordable now and in the future.

Fire and rescue services should continuously look for ways to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. This includes transforming how they work and improving their value for money. Services should have robust spending plans that reflect future financial challenges and efficiency opportunities, and they should invest in better services for the public.

Area for improvement

The service needs to assure itself that it is maximising opportunities to improve workforce productivity and develop future capacity through use of innovation, including the use of technology.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service has stabilised its financial position

We are encouraged to see the improvements the service has made since the last inspection. Following its exit from county council governance, the service was in a position of significant financial risk. It has taken extensive steps to address this, including lobbying central government to increase its funding. This has resulted in a stabilised position on which it has been able to develop secure plans for the future. Its MTFP now results in a balanced budget.

The underpinning assumptions in the MTFP are relatively robust, realistic and prudent. They take account of the wider external environment and some scenario planning for future spending reductions. These include changes in council tax income and potential increases in costs associated with the pension scheme.

Despite the challenges it has faced, and the need to increase its budget to improve operational performance, we are pleased to see that the service has continued to identify savings to be made over the course of its MTFP. The chief fire officer and leadership team have been involved in developing these proposals. They told us they believe the forecasted savings that need to be found within operational areas are achievable.

The service has established reserves and has a clear strategy to manage them

At the time of our last inspection, the service didn't have any financial reserves, a capital plan or any capital funding. Encouragingly, the service has since met its own objective of establishing an adequate level of general reserves within three years of the governance change.

The service has a sensible and sustainable plan for using its reserves. Of the £4.433m planned reserves at 31 March 2022, £2.433m of this is earmarked for essential capital investment and budgetary risks during 2022/23. This includes a range of investments in fleet, estates and ICT, which have all been subject to long-term lack of spend under the previous governance arrangements.

The service is beginning to introduce change in its fleet and estates

In our last inspection we identified that the service needed robust plans to consider the future management of its fleet and properties. The service has since developed plans to introduce change in both these areas.

There are strategies in place that are beginning to reverse the previous under-investment, including:

- procuring eight new fire engines and an aerial appliance to replace assets past their end of life;
- developing a detailed plan to carry out urgent remedial work and modifications at fire stations in the next three years; and
- developing a joint police and fire fleet workshop.

As the service moves into its next IRMP in April 2022 and conducts further reviews of its operational response model, it should ensure the fleet and estates strategies are linked closely to the reviews' outcomes.

The service's collaborative work is improving its capacity for future change

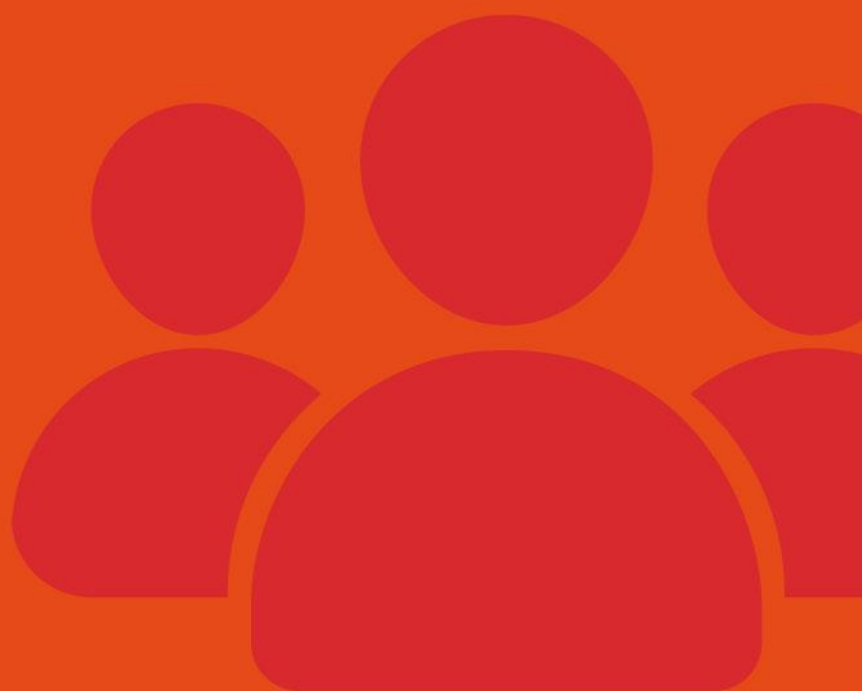
The service has put in place the capacity and capability needed to achieve sustainable transformation, and it routinely seeks opportunities to work with others to improve efficiency and provide better services in the future. For example, the joint human resources (HR) team within enabling services now contains seven HR advisors with different areas of expertise. Before November 2021, a single HR business partner supported the entire service. This is just one example of the way the collaboration has improved capacity and access to a workforce with a greater range of skills.

Since our last inspection, the enabling services function has developed a detailed ICT strategy. Its aim is to help the service exploit changes in technology to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. But many of these projects are in their early stages and are yet to bring the necessary improvements. The service has been focusing on improving infrastructure (for example, servers) with detailed plans to be put in place over the coming years. This should be an area of priority for the service.

The service is beginning to consider opportunities for income generation

The service considers options for generating extra income, but its ambition and track record in securing extra income is limited. It has developed a draft commercial strategy and has committed to a £25,000 income generation target for the year 2023/24.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Requires improvement

Summary

A well-led fire and rescue service develops and maintains a workforce that is supported, professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The service's leaders should be positive role models, and this should be reflected in the behaviour of staff at all levels. All staff should feel supported and be given opportunities to develop. Equality, diversity and inclusion are part of everything the service does and its staff understand their role in promoting it. Overall, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at looking after its people.

The service has taken some action to respond to the areas we identified in our first inspection, but it still needs to make significant improvements.

Senior leaders show strong strategic intent to improve the culture, embed values and promote EDI. But the service isn't making enough progress in this area. We found that it is failing to implement the objectives outlined in its strategies to make sure it effectively looks after its people. Staff widely misunderstand the benefits of a diverse workforce. Despite a high proportion of staff members understanding the service's values, there are still examples of behaviours that are contrary to those values.

The service has a range of appropriate policies and procedures to manage workforce concerns such as grievances and disciplines. But it inconsistently applies these policies and there are managers throughout the organisation who don't understand them.

Since our last inspection, the service has made some improvements to its promotion process. This is now more structured and has improved staff members' understanding and perception of fairness. It could still take more action to identify and develop high-potential leaders to meet its long-term needs.

The service has positively responded to our [cause of concern](#) about its processes to provide, record and monitor risk-critical training. It now has appropriate systems in place to make sure skills are maintained and that there is effective corporate oversight of this process.

Promoting the right values and culture



Requires improvement (2019: Good)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at promoting the right values and culture.

Fire and rescue services should have positive and inclusive cultures, modelled by the behaviours of their senior leaders. Health and safety should be promoted effectively, and staff should have access to a range of wellbeing support that can be tailored to their individual needs.

Areas for improvement

- The service should make sure it has effective absence and attendance procedures in place.
- The service should formally monitor overtime and secondary contracts to make sure working hours are not exceeded.
- The service should assure itself that middle managers are visible and demonstrate service values through their behaviours.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Service values are not fully embedded

The service has well-defined values, which staff know. In our staff survey, 97 percent (193 of 200) of respondents were aware of the service's statement of values. The service is making progress in embedding the new national [Core Code of Ethics](#). We heard how it is integrating the code into policies, training and performance conversations.

Despite this, values are not translating into an effective culture throughout the organisation. We found that the visibility and approachability of managers varied across the service. Some staff members told us that if an issue could not be resolved locally, they would not feel comfortable approaching middle managers with a problem at work.

Through our staff survey, 38 percent (73 of 193) of respondents said senior leaders don't consistently model and maintain service values. Although many staff told us during the inspection that they are individually prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour, we also heard examples of situations that the service hadn't resolved. The results of our staff survey showed that 44 percent (87 of 200) of respondents felt unable to challenge freely.

Staff can access services to support mental and physical health

The service continues to have effective wellbeing policies in place that are available to staff. A significant range of wellbeing support is available to support both physical and mental health. The service's outsourced occupational health unit and several other external providers can give specialist support. It has also introduced an internal wellbeing team. This is made up of staff from across the organisation who have all trained as mental health first aiders and give support to colleagues, particularly following exposure to traumatic incidents. Most staff we spoke to were overwhelmingly positive of the benefits the welfare team has brought about.

In our 2018 inspection, we found that although wellbeing provisions were in place, not all staff understood how to access them. The service has made good progress to improve this and to actively promote the way it supports staff wellbeing. This includes making information available through internal communication networks and displaying it in buildings. In our survey, 95 percent (189 of 200) of respondents told us they feel able to access services to support mental wellbeing. To ensure these provisions remain effective, the service should make sure it holds wellbeing conversations with all staff; 31 percent (62 of 200) of respondents told us they discussed their health and wellbeing with their manager less than once a year or not at all.

There is a positive culture of health and safety management

The service continues to have effective and well understood health and safety policies and procedures in place. It uses a systematic approach to report, record and investigate accidents and [near misses](#). We found examples of the service positively using the learning and recommendations from investigations to inform future practice and reduce the likelihood of re-occurrences.

These policies and procedures are readily available and effectively promoted to all staff. It also makes sure all staff receive a basic level of health and safety training, and those with line management responsibilities must complete an Institution of Occupational Safety and Health course. Our survey showed that 90 percent (179 of 200) of respondents felt their personal safety and welfare is treated seriously at work.

The service also robustly manages the fitness testing of operational staff and has procedures in place to support those who don't meet the required benchmark.

The service needs to improve the way it monitors staff working hours

The service doesn't effectively monitor staff who have secondary employment or dual contracts to make sure they comply with the secondary employment policy and don't work excessive hours. It has procedures in place to make sure staff have enough rest between duties, but it doesn't have a system in place to monitor the total hours they work. During our inspection we saw evidence of an audit the service had recently completed of overtime hours. But this wasn't a structured or regular process. It also didn't consider dual-role contract staff.

The service doesn't consistently apply its absence management procedures

As part of our inspection, we reviewed some case files to consider how the service manages and supports staff through absence.

The service has an absence policy, but staff and managers don't widely understand it. From the files we reviewed, we saw several inconsistent decisions made because of lack of guidance or because managers hadn't used their discretion well. Managers don't always follow policy. For example, they don't always complete return to work interviews or make occupational health referrals, even for long-term absences. The way managers keep in touch with employees during periods of absence is inconsistent and subject to no formal recording in many cases.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good (2019: Inadequate)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at getting the right people with the right skills.

Fire and rescue services should have a workforce plan in place that is linked to their [integrated risk management plans \(IRMPs\)](#), sets out their current and future skills requirements and addresses capability gaps. They should supplement this with a culture of continuous improvement that includes appropriate learning and development throughout the service.

Area for improvement

The service should assure itself that staff with managerial responsibilities are appropriately trained for their role.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Workforce planning ensures the required skills and capabilities are available

In our 2018 inspection we identified that the service didn't have a workforce plan in place and that training plans weren't linked to the IRMP. The service now has a workforce strategy that assesses succession planning and establishment requirements. It translates this into plans for recruitment, training and promotion. The workforce plan is based on various scenarios, particularly relating to possible variations in the retirement profile. This makes sure skills and capabilities align with what is needed to effectively deliver the IRMP.

Workforce and succession planning is subject to consistent scrutiny in the form of regular meetings to discuss requirements. This involves managers from across the organisation. The service may wish to consider how it could better use these meetings to make sure its on-call stations have the right skills and capabilities. We found evidence of a lack of skills (for example, fire engine drivers) inhibiting operational performance. There was no clear plan to resolve these problems either locally or through the establishment meeting.

Most staff told us they can access the training they need to be effective in their role. The service's training plans make sure they can maintain competence and capability effectively. Of the staff who responded to our survey, 73 percent (145 of 200) agreed they have received sufficient training to effectively do their job.

The service has improved the way it records and monitors risk-critical training

Our last inspection identified a cause of concern that the service didn't have systems in place to effectively provide, record and monitor risk-critical training. We are pleased to find it has made significant progress in this area.

The service uses a single electronic system to monitor staff competence. It records centrally provided training (for example, breathing apparatus refreshers), e-learning and station-based maintenance of competence. Both operational and non-operational staff use the system.

The service regularly updates its understanding of staff members' skills and risk-critical safety capabilities through a dashboard tool, where managers have a clear view of any outstanding training needs. This is reviewed at a competency board, which forms part of the service's performance management framework. This approach means the service can identify gaps in workforce capabilities and resilience. This helps it make sound and financially sustainable decisions about current and future needs.

Throughout our inspection we found that managers were confident in the system and actively used it to maintain their teams' skills and capabilities. We reviewed a range of training records and found that compliance with training frequencies is very high. For example, of all the files we reviewed for wearing breathing apparatus in live fire conditions, 100 percent of employees had completed the training within the required timescale. This was replicated across a range of skills.

The service provides a range of learning and development resources

A culture of continuous improvements is promoted throughout the service and staff are encouraged to learn and develop.

We are pleased to see that the service has a range of learning and development resources in place. Although operational, prevention and protection staff receive adequate training, we heard that not all non-operational staff have access to the same opportunities as their colleagues. Of the staff who responded to our survey, 39 percent (78 of 200) told us that they aren't satisfied with the learning and development opportunities available to them.

The service has recently increased the leadership and management training it gives its supervisory and middle managers. Through [continuing professional development](#) sessions, it covers subjects such as grievance processes, workplace diversity and talent conversations. But not all staff have attended these sessions and some managers told us they have never had any form of leadership and management training. This was reflected in our findings around how well the service resolves workforce concerns.

The service should make sure it has a structure in place to ensure all managers receive the necessary training to perform their role, in particular the application of HR policies and procedures.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement (2019: Requires improvement)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Creating a more representative workforce will provide huge benefits for fire and rescue services. This includes greater access to talent and different ways of thinking, and improved understanding of and engagement with their local communities. Each service should make sure equality, diversity and inclusion are firmly understood and demonstrated throughout the organisation. This includes successfully taking steps to remove inequality and making progress to improve fairness, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the service. It should proactively seek and respond to feedback from staff and make sure any action taken is meaningful.

Cause of concern

The service hasn't made enough progress since the last inspection to improve EDI.

Recommendations

By 31 August 2022, the service should develop an action plan to:

- engage with its staff to develop clear EDI objectives and training to increase awareness of EDI and its importance across the organisation, including understanding and addressing the impact positive action is having on staff;
- make sure it has robust processes in place to undertake equality impact assessments and review any actions agreed as a result;
- make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographic and needs; and
- support staff and managers to confidently challenge and manage inappropriate behaviour.

Areas for improvement

- The service should make sure that policies used to handle grievance and discipline cases are applied in a consistent and timely manner across the workforce, that staff have confidence in the process, and that those involved in these processes are appropriately trained.
- The service should make sure problems identified through staff feedback mechanisms are appropriately addressed and that actions it takes are communicated to staff in a timely way.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service seeks feedback from staff, but this is not always meaningful

Since our last inspection, the service has developed several ways to engage with staff on issues and decisions that affect them. This includes methods to build all-staff awareness of fairness and diversity, as well as targeted engagement to identify matters that affect different staff groups. Members of the leadership team visit fire stations regularly and the chief fire officer hosts a monthly video conferencing call, which all staff members can join.

We found during our inspection that some staff are able to openly share ideas in these forums. But we also found the feedback methods don't have credibility with some of the workforce. Also, leaders don't consistently give feedback in response to suggestions. The results of our staff survey showed that 52 percent (103 of 200) of respondents don't feel confident in the mechanisms for giving feedback. For example, even though staff trialling a new variable crewing system at two fire stations have been involved in extensive consultation exercises, we heard that the service hasn't responded to many of the issues raised.

The service doesn't consistently resolve workforce concerns

The service should improve staff understanding of bullying, harassment and discrimination, including their duty to eliminate them. In our staff survey, 17 percent (34 of 200) of respondents told us they had been subject to harassment and 24 percent (48 of 200) to discrimination over the past 12 months. Of these staff, only 25 percent thought reporting their concerns had led to or would lead to a meaningful response.

The service has clear policies and procedures in place. But we found that where behaviours were robustly challenged, it was usually because of senior leadership involvement. Overall, we found that staff have limited confidence in the service's ability to deal effectively with cases of bullying, harassment and discrimination or other grievances. Many do not view the process as confidential or impartial. During our inspection we found inconsistencies in the way the service applied policies, for example:

- cases raised with supervisory and middle managers take a disproportionate amount of time to resolve;

- staff don't always understand the outcomes of grievances and how they can appeal;
- staff don't always feel they receive sufficient welfare support while going through the process; and
- it is unclear how the service makes sure the outcomes of investigations are consistent and proportionate.

The service should make sure it applies the contents of its policies more consistently in all cases. It should appropriately train those involved, and its HR function should give them appropriate levels of support and expertise.

The workforce doesn't understand the purpose and benefits of diversity

The service takes some action to understand and remove the risk of disproportionality in recruitment processes. For example, it has a reasonable adjustments policy, which it applies throughout selection processes. We found evidence of the service using it well in a promotions process.

The service undertakes some positive action to make sure its processes are fair and accessible to candidates from a range of backgrounds. Staff from across the service were involved in a range of targeted events before its most recent [wholetime firefighter](#) recruitment campaign.

In our 2018 inspection we found that staff didn't understand the benefits of positive action or a diverse workforce. Disappointingly, this continues to be the case. Throughout our inspection we consistently found that operational staff don't support the service's efforts to improve workforce diversity. We heard several examples of staff using gender-inappropriate and unacceptable language to describe the service's work in this area. Many staff we spoke to incorrectly believe the service lowers its entry standards to recruit individuals with specific [protected characteristics](#). Some were explicitly not supportive of positive action events. The service needs to do more to make sure its existing staff understand and support the action it is taking.

The service has made some progress to improve gender diversity for all staff in the organisation. At 31 March 2021, 18 percent of the workforce were women. The England average at that date was also 18 percent. The figure for Northamptonshire is a 10 percent increase since our last inspection. The service can't accurately say how well its workforce represents the residential population from minority ethnic backgrounds as it doesn't hold ethnicity data for a high proportion of its workforce. Of the service's staff members, 37.6 percent haven't declared their ethnicity to the service (against an England average of 9 percent).

The service knows it needs to go further to increase workforce diversity, especially in middle and senior management roles. But it is unclear what plans the service has in place to address this. We found no evidence of any positive action taking place in the latest [watch](#) and station manager promotion processes.

The service is making slow progress in implementing improvements to EDI

The service needs to improve its approach to EDI. Senior leaders show a strong strategic intent and there is a detailed strategy in place, but this isn't yet resulting in the improvements the service needs. It has taken steps to establish a staff network group, but it isn't using this to its fullest extent. Much of the service's work focuses on gender equality, as opposed to the full range of protected characteristics.

Although the service has a process in place to assess equality impact, the impact on each protected characteristic isn't properly assessed or acted on. We reviewed various equality impact assessments, which were poor in quality and detail. The service hadn't consulted with the staff network group on any of the assessments we examined. And it doesn't hold good enough workforce equality data to inform its impact assessments. This means it can't effectively understand how potential changes may affect its workforce.

As with positive action, we found that some staff don't understand or support the service's intent to promote equality and inclusion. The service should continue to make improvements to its processes in this area and make sure staff at all levels of the organisation understand the contents of its EDI strategy.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement (2019: Requires improvement)

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at managing performance and developing leaders.

Fire and rescue services should have robust and meaningful performance management arrangements in place for their staff. All staff should be supported to meet their potential, and there should be a focus on developing staff and improving diversity into leadership roles.

Areas for improvement

- The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the performance development review process, ensuring it uses this to develop talent within the organisation.
- The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service doesn't consistently manage individual performance

The service has an inconsistent process in place for performance and development. Staff don't all have specific and individual objectives or have had their performance assessed in the past year. In the year to 31 March 2021, 71 percent of wholetime staff, 81 percent of support staff and 61 percent of [on-call](#) staff received an appraisal. And 33 percent (66 of 200) of staff have a performance conversation once a year or less.

Many staff we spoke to don't view the appraisal process as meaningful or effective. Managers told us they don't feel it effectively links to organisational objectives. Once completed, appraisals are stored locally and not submitted for review. This results in an inconsistent approach, meaning development needs are identified but not always actioned.

We are aware that the service is introducing a new personal development review system in April 2022. It should make sure it uses this as an opportunity to formalise its appraisal process, introduce central quality assurance and tangibly develop talent within the organisation.

The service has improved its promotion processes

We are encouraged to find that since our last inspection, the service has put considerable effort into developing its promotion and progression processes so they are fair and understood by staff. The promotion and progression policies are comprehensive and cover opportunities in all roles.

The service's workforce plan includes a detailed annual promotion timetable. We found most staff understand this timetable and can use it to plan and prepare for future opportunities. This has improved staff perceptions of fairness and consistency in the process. The service uses temporary promotions appropriately to fill short-term resourcing gaps. At 31 March 2021, the average length of a temporary promotion was 192 days. This is reflective of the structured annual promotion process.

We found that the templates and tools the service uses to manage and record promotion processes at different levels are inconsistent. The service may wish to consider standardising them.

The service has effective succession planning processes in place, which allow it to effectively manage the career pathways of its staff, including roles needing specialist skills. This is considered by the establishment group, which determines future promotional requirements. The service has introduced a separate talent conversation process to help those seeking promotion. But we found that not all managers are using it effectively.

The service could still do more to identify and develop high-potential leaders

In our last inspection we identified an area for improvement that the service needed to put in place a process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff. We found it has since taken some limited steps to address this, but it could still do more.

It has some talent management schemes in place to develop leaders and high-potential staff. This includes a talent pool process, where staff receive some additional development opportunities. It isn't clear how the service uses this, other than to fill projected vacancies at station manager level in the short term.

The service should consider putting in place more formal arrangements to identify and support members of staff to become senior leaders in the longer term. The service has detailed information in its workforce plan on the expected vacancies at each level of the organisation up to 2025. But it isn't using this information to drive succession planning and identification of future high-potential talent at all levels.

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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMISSIONER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

FIRE - FINANCIAL UPDATE AS AT JUNE 2022

REPORT BY THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Purpose and Context

1. This report sets out at a high level:
 - a) a financial update on the 2021/22 provisional outturn;
 - b) the forecast financial outturn for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and;
 - c) current and future challenges.
2. 2022/23 is the fourth full year operating as Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA) following the governance transfer on the 1 January 2019.

2020/21 Audited Statement of Accounts

3. The NCFRA 2020/21 statement of accounts were certified as unqualified on 28 February 2022. The 2021/22 draft statement of accounts were published in July 2022 in line with statutory timescales. Both are available on the OPFCC website.

2021/22 Provisional Outturn and Assurance

4. The draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 were published on the PFCC website before the statutory deadline in July 2022. However, due to the resourcing challenges the external auditors continue to experience, they have not yet provided dates for the 2021/22 external audit to take place. The external audit of NCFRA accounts have been significantly impacted by audit delays since it became a corporation sole in 2018/19.

5. Work commenced on the police external audit in Northamptonshire in January 2022. However, despite representation, external audit resourcing challenges means it has not yet been concluded. No external audit opinions have been issued for 2020/21 for any of the Police and Crime Commissioners or Chief Constables in the East Midlands Region.
6. In 2021/22, NCFRA received a number of Home Office Grants and other reliefs towards the end of the financial year. As such, there was a higher than anticipated £323K underspend at year end for which the PFCC approved the following:
 - £101K of Carry Forward Requests to support one off plans in 2022/23;
 - £92K ring fenced in reserves to support COVID pressures and ring fenced transformation funding provided by the Home Office;
 - £130K ring fenced in reserves to support investment in Police, Fire and Crime Plan priorities.
7. As at 31 March 2022 reserves had increased from £5.471m to £5.710m, of which all but £2m are earmarked for specific purposes.

Forecast Summary Revenue Outturn as at 31 March 2023

8. The forecast outturn is based on nine months of estimated data, therefore is subject to change. It will be updated to reflect latest information as the year progresses.
9. The first three months of the year the service have experienced increased operational demands and inflationary pressures above those forecast at the time of the budget. The outturn is subject to change as the year progresses and at this early stage in the year, there is a forecast overspend of £447K as follows:

Budget Group	As at 30 June (P3)		
	Original Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Response Control	899	801	(98)
Response Wholetime	13,535	14,310	775
Response Retained	2,112	1,968	(144)
Business Planning & Perf	201	194	(7)
Joint Operations Team	96	87	(9)
Commercial Training	(9)	(9)	0
Community Prevention	515	515	0
Community Protection	568	568	0
Corporate Budgets	1,206	1,233	27
Enabling Services Joint Teams	2,220	2,220	0
Engineering Services & Stores	1,037	1,155	118
Digital and Technology	942	942	0
Occupational Health & Wellbeing	186	186	0
Estates & Facilities	1,556	1,424	(132)
Securing Water Supplies	66	66	0
Strategic Leadership Team	803	803	0
Training	734	734	0
Service Information Team	278	201	(77)
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	150	150	0
Investment Interest	(3)	(9)	(6)
Total	27,092	27,539	447

10. The Fire budget is delegated to the Chief Fire Officer and the conditions are set out in a formal budget letter from the PFCC to the Chief Fire Officer each year. This includes the expectation that the service will manage within the budget envelope allocated. If an overspend is forecast the service will realise efficiencies to bring it back in line.
11. However, the PFCC acknowledges that if there are unexpected or unprecedented circumstances or unplanned demand pressures, he and the S151 Officer will work with the Chief Fire Officer to seek additional Home Office funding and/or provide support where appropriate.
12. The budget for 2022/23 already included £350K of planned efficiencies 2022/23 and whilst it is currently assumed these will be achieved, the Chief Fire Officer is required to update the PFCC on progress throughout the year.

13. The most significant variations of note are as follows:

a) **Wholetime and Retained Firefighters** - There has been significant additional operational demand experienced in the first few months of the year. Furthermore, there are vacancies in retained firefighters, higher than anticipated sickness levels and the new recruits are not yet fully deployable. Therefore, additional overtime and bank costs have been incurred. With the hotter than usual weather conditions, these pressures have continued into July and August.

The PFCC has required the Chief Fire Officer to provide detailed monthly monitoring on overtime and bank arrangements to ensure he is fully sighted on the challenges and the S151 Officer has already highlighted the operational demands with the Home Office to facilitate a claim if any national funding is made available. Although pay awards are currently estimated in line with the budget, this is a significant uncertainty and is highlighted later in the report.

b) **Response Control** – additional funding was built into the control budget to facilitate handover and training in the event of vacancies. It has not yet been required, therefore a small underspend is currently forecast.

c) **Engineering and Stores** – fuel costs are significantly more than budgeted due to inflation and additional cost pressures are also being experienced with vehicle parts.

d) **Estates and Facilities** – additional unbudgeted income has arisen from the partial letting of Moulton Logistics Centre. Whilst this area is currently forecast as an underspend, it is subject to further inflationary pressures.

e) **Service Information Team** – the underspend on the SIT team is due to the timing of staff vacancies and a number of individuals have taken up posts in the joint Enabling Services Teams.

f) **Capital Financing Costs** are assumed to be spent as whilst there has been slippage on the 2021/22 programme, the current planning assumption is that any underspend in this area will be used as revenue contributions to mitigate the costs in future years. This will continue to be reviewed throughout the year based on the overall financial position and the capital programme updates.

14. At this early stage in the year, funding receipts are assumed to be in line with those budgeted. However, variations do arise on business rates and government grants and these will continue to be reviewed as the year progresses.

15. The PFCC scrutinises the budget monitoring throughout the year and receives regular updates at the Accountability Board.

Future Challenges and Uncertainties

16. There are a number of uncertainties associated with the forecast, some of the key ones are as follows:

- a) There is uncertainty about the cost or impact of pay negotiations for 2022 as negotiations with the unions are still underway in respect of the 2022 Pay settlement. Firefighter pay is negotiated through the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services arrangements which is made up of a group of employer representatives, which does not include the Northamptonshire PFCC.

A national employers offer was based on affordability of a 2% increase, which was rejected. In rejecting the offer, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) have stated:

“the employers need to come back with a genuine and fair pay offer that recognises the financial pressures our members face....members will consider all options, including strike action.”

Inflation and the cost of living have influenced other public settlements such as Police which was set by the Police Remuneration Body and was based on a flat amount of £1,900. Fire employers are keen to increase the offer but are also mindful of the budget settlements from government which only provided for a minimal inflationary increase. The PFCC fully supports the letter that Fire employers have written to the Home Secretary requesting central funding support to enable an increased offer to be made.

If a Fire settlement was provided which matches the Pay Award given to Policing, this would equate to approximately an additional cost above that budgeted of £290K in 22/23 and £560K in a full year.

- b) The rate of inflation and supply chain costs particularly for fuel, vehicle parts and utilities are challenging in the current financial year and this uncertainty will continue in the
 - c) It is uncertain what impact the cost of living will have on council tax and business rate receipts, the S151 officer will continue to link in with the North and West authorities to gain updates as appropriate.
17. Reserves are currently sufficient and some funding has been set aside for the new Chief Fire Officer and PFCC to take forward Police, Fire and Crime Plan and Transformative opportunities. However, if pressures cannot be contained within the annual budget

envelope and reserves are utilised, the ability to take forward such opportunities could be impacted.

18. The S151 Officer and PFCC will continue to link in with the Home Office to ensure that they are updated on financial pressures facing Northamptonshire Fire.
19. Work has already started on the 2023/24 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan, this includes considering future assumptions of costs and funding.
20. As the budget work continues, the PFCC is mindful of the impact that inflation and the cost of living is having on the residents of Northamptonshire. This PFCC will continue to update the Panel in his regular reports.

Recommendation

21. That the Police, Fire and Crime Panel considers the financial update and forecast outturn.



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMISSIONER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

POLICE - FINANCIAL UPDATE AS AT JUNE 2022

REPORT BY THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Purpose and Context

1. This report sets out at a high level:
 - a) a financial update on the 2021/22 provisional outturn;
 - b) the forecast financial outturn for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and;
 - c) current and future challenges.

2020/21 Statement of Accounts

2. Work commenced on the Police external audits in Northamptonshire in January 2022. However, despite representation by the S151 Officers, external audit resourcing challenges mean the audits have not yet been concluded. As at July 2022, no external audit opinions have been issued for 2020/21 for the accounts for any of the Police and Crime Commissioners or Chief Constables in the East Midlands Region.
3. The delays have been experienced every year since the contract was awarded in 2018/19 and the S151 Officer has set out an intention to write to the Home Office on behalf of all regional Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable (CC) Chief Finance Officers; expressing concern about the delays, and seeking their support to conclude the audits in a more timely manner and agree audit timescales for 2021/22.

4. Procurement for most of the local authority, Police and Fire external audit contracts is undertaken and contracts monitored nationally. The next national contracts will run from 2023/24 are currently under procurement and due to be announced shortly.

2021/22 Provisional Outturn and Assurance

5. The draft PFCC and CC Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 were published on the PFCC website before the statutory deadline in July 2022. However, due to the resourcing challenges the external auditors continue to experience, they have not yet provided dates for the 2021/22 external audit to take place. The external audit of Police accounts has been significantly impacted by audit delays since the commencement of the current contract in 2018/19.
6. At year end, the PFCC budgets underspent by £1.011M after transferring £750K to support the revenue costs of financing the capital programme. As reported throughout the year, the underspend arose mainly due to timing of staff and some activities which were due to be implemented in 2021/22 slipping into 2022/23. The balance was transferred to ring fenced reserves and some of this will be drawn down in 2022/23.
7. At year end, after the agreed use of reserves to support the new financial system and other initiatives, the Chief Constable Budgets underspent by £50K.
8. The ring fenced investment funding of £1M has been transferred to reserves to support operational investments which will be draw down as part of the 2022/23 budget.
9. After these reserve transfers, and taking into account capital financing and additional funding; there was a total net underspend at year end of £142K. The PFCC has approved this amount as carry forwards for the Chief Constable to utilise to support one off implementation costs of operational software and an additional contribution to the equipment reserve to mitigate the cost of body armour following national changes to the replacement frequency.
10. As at 31 March 2022 reserves had increased from £17.951M to £19.350M, of which all but £5M (the general reserve) are earmarked for specific purposes.

Forecast Summary Revenue Outturn as at 31 March 2023

11. The forecast outturn is based on nine months of estimated data, therefore is subject to change. It will be updated to reflect latest information as the year progresses.

12. At this early stage in the year, there is a forecast overspend of £705K. The forecast is attached in detail as an Appendix and summarised below as follows:

Budget Heading	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
Budgets Consented to the Chief Constable	149,811	150,574	763
Managed by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner			
- PFCC Staff and Office Costs	1,154	1,147	(7)
- Commissioning and Delivery Services	4,463	4,468	5
Capital Financing Costs	3,849	3,849	0
Investment and Savings	649	649	0
Budgeted Transfer to Reserves	438	438	0
Additional Funding	0	(56)	(56)
Total Policing Outturn	160,364	161,069	705

13. Key highlights:

Chief Constable Budgets

- i. At the end of June the Police Pay budget is broadly on target. The budget assumed a 2% pay award (with a further 1% in a contingency), however, in July 2022, the national Pay Review Body awarded a £1,900 (average of 5%) increase to all Police officers effective from 1 September. Some Home Office Grant will be provided to mitigate the cost, but there is a potential unbudgeted pressure of £180K in 2022/23 and £520K in a full year. This will be included in future monitoring reports.
- ii. 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 and utilised in the future towards that purpose.
- ii. The Force Control Room underspend is due to timing of staff vacancies.
- iii. The most significant variance relates to Enabling Services with an overspend after transfers from reserves of £818K. The majority of this relates to the transport department and in particular the significant inflation increases on fuel and the supply chain where contractors and manufacturers are passing on their increased costs by price increases in parts and labour. Whilst efforts will

continue to be made to bring these budgets back in line, it is envisaged they will remain under pressure during the year.

- iv. Central Budgets are forecast to overspend mainly due to the pressure of staff pay award which was budgeted at 2% from September but was agreed nationally at 2.1% and backdated to 1 April. This may increase further as negotiations have been reopened following the agreement of the police officer award.

PFCC Office and Delivery Budgets

- v. The pressures in the PFCC Staffing, Complaints and Communications budgets relate to the higher than anticipated pay award set out above. However, underspends in the office budget such as travel and subsistence and printing have mitigated these costs.
- vi. It is envisaged the Police, Fire and Crime Plan Delivery Fund will be fully spent in the year. The PFCC has commissioned work 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. This funding was ring fenced in reserves at the end of 2021/22 and will be drawn down as required.
- vii. The OPFCC delivery budgets are underspent in the area of early intervention, and Youth provision due to staff vacancies.
- viii. The Commissioning budget is forecast to underspend due to the potential extension of the Operation Alloy scheme in the Force Control Room. The funding for this was ring fenced in reserves at the end of 2021/22 and will be drawn down as required.

Funding

- ix The actual funding allocations for 2022/23 when received are slightly higher than when the budget was set.
14. Whilst an overspend is currently forecast for the Force (Chief Constable) budgets, it is important to highlight that this is based on prudent estimates and assumptions and nine months of estimated data. It is, therefore, likely to change during the year.
 15. The Force budget is consented to the Chief Constable to manage and the conditions of this are set out in a formal budget letter from the PFCC to the Chief Constable each year.
 16. 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 and options available include but are not

limited to: efficiencies could be sought, funding from reserves could be provided and/or any overspend could be taken from the following year's budget allocation.

17. The PFCC scrutinises the budget monitoring throughout the year and receives regular updates at the Accountability Board.

Future Challenges and Uncertainties

18. There are a number of uncertainties associated with the forecast, some of the key ones are as follows:

- a) There is uncertainty about the cost or impact of additional staff pay negotiations for 2022 as national negotiations with the unions have reopened following the Police Pay awards.
- b) The additional impact of the Police and Staff pay awards on the Medium Term Financial Plan will be incorporated into the next update of the plan as these are additional unbudgeted pressures.
- c) The rate of inflation and supply chain costs particularly for fuel, vehicle parts and utilities are challenging in the current financial year and this uncertainty will continue in the future.
- c) It is uncertain what impact the cost of living will have on council tax and business rate receipts, the S151 officer will continue to link in with the North and West authorities to gain updates as appropriate.

19. Reserves are currently sufficient and provision is available for the PFCC to take forward Police, Fire and Crime Plan and other opportunities with the Chief Constable. However, if pressures cannot be contained within the annual budget envelope and reserves are utilised, the ability to take forward such opportunities could be impacted.

20. Work has already started on the 2023/24 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan, this includes considering future assumptions of costs and funding.

21. As the budget work continues, whilst planning assumptions are based on the Home Office expectation of £10 precept increases over the next two years, the PFCC is mindful of the impact that inflation and the cost of living is having on the residents of Northamptonshire. This PFCC will continue to update the Panel in his regular reports.

Recommendation

22. That the Police, Fire and Crime Panel considers the financial update and forecast outturn.

Northamptonshire Police – Forecast Outturn as at 30 June 2022 (Quarter 1)

Budget Heading	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
Budgets Managed by the Chief Constable			
Non Devolved Budgets			
Police Pay and Oncosts	77,192	77,185	(7)
Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)	3,396	3,396	0
Other Pensions Costs	902	902	0
	81,490	81,483	(7)
Devolved Budgets			
Devolved Operational Budgets	20,144	20,153	9
Control Room	6,435	6,217	(218)
Enabling Departments	25,442	26,260	818
Corporate Services	3,433	3,343	(90)
Central Budgets	5,690	6,090	400
Collaboration Units	7,177	7,028	(149)
	68,321	69,091	770
Budgets consented to the Chief Constable	149,811	150,574	763
Budgets Managed by the PFCC			
PFCC Office Budget			
Staff and Office Costs	1,363	1,356	(7)
Contribution to Governance Costs from Fire	(209)	(209)	0
	1,154	1,147	(7)
Commissioning and Delivery Budgets			
Commissioning	328	404	76
Victims and Witnesses Services (net of grant)	425	425	0
Crime Prevention and Safer Streets Support	250	250	0
Customer Services - Complaints	161	163	2
Delivery, Accountability and Digital	129	129	0
Domestic and Sexual Abuse Provision	429	429	0
Early Intervention & EI DA support	1,201	1,123	(78)
Joint Communications Team With Fire (net)	118	124	6
Reducing Reoffending	350	350	0
Youth Work, Safeguarding and Youth Offending	822	821	(1)
Police and Crime Plan Delivery Fund	250	250	0
	4,463	4,468	5
Total Budgets Managed by the PFCC	5,617	5,615	(2)
Capital Financing Costs	3,849	3,849	0
Investment and Savings	649	649	0
Budgeted Transfer to Reserves	438	438	0
Additional Funding	0	(56)	(56)
Total Policing	160,364	161,069	705

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

Report Title	Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel Work Programme 2022/23
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	15/08/2022
West S151 (for West and joint papers)	Martin Henry	31/08/2022

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Outline Work Programme 2022/23

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report is intended to enable the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel to review progress with the development and delivery of its 2022/23 work programme.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The report invites the Panel to review the latest version of its outline work programme for 2022/23 and to endorse this subject to any changes that the Panel considers to be necessary.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel endorses its outline work programme for 2022/23, subject to any changes that the Panel considers to be necessary.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendation is intended to support the effective operation of the Panel during 2022/23 and the delivery of its statutory responsibilities.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Policing & Crime Act 2017 and supporting legislation give various specific responsibilities to the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel (“the Panel”). These are principally as follows:
- Scrutinising and reporting on the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC)’s proposed Police and Fire & Rescue precepts
 - Scrutinising and reporting on the PFCC’s Police & Crime Plan and Fire & Rescue Plan
 - Scrutinising and reporting on the PFCC’s Annual Report on the delivery of Police & Crime Plan objectives and on the annual Fire & Rescue Statement reporting compliance with the Fire & 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 & 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 4.1 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.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The Panel considered its outline work programme at its meeting on 19th July 2022 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.

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 & Social Responsibility Act 2011

Policing & Crime Act 2017

Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel Rules of Procedure

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Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel – Outline Work Programme 2022/23

MEETING DATE	STATUTORY BUSINESS	DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS	BUSINESS RELATING TO PANEL OPERATION	OTHER BUSINESS
8 September 2022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFCC’s Delivery update - PFCC’s Budget updates - Joint Independent Audit Committee Annual Report - Outcomes of the 2021/22 HMICFRS inspection of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service - Use of ANPR technology in Northamptonshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work programme - Complaints monitoring report 	
1 December 2022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFCC’s Delivery update - PFCC’s Budget updates - Independent Custody Visitors scheme in Northamptonshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work programme 	
2 February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFCC’s proposed Police precept and budget for 2023/24 - PFCC’s proposed Fire & Rescue precept and budget for 2023/24 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work programme - 2023/24 meeting dates 	

MEETING DATE	STATUTORY BUSINESS	DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS	BUSINESS RELATING TO PANEL OPERATION	OTHER BUSINESS
16 February 2023 (Reserve meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFCC's revised Police precept and budget for 2023/24 [if required] and/or - PFCC's revised Fire & Rescue precept and budget for 2023/24 [if required] 			
20 April 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFCC's Delivery updates - PFCC's Budget updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work programme - Complaints monitoring report 	
July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFCC's Annual Report on Policing for 2022/23 - PFCC's Fire & Rescue Statement for 2022/23 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appointment of Panel Chair and Deputy Chair - Work programme - Appointment of Complaints Sub Committee members 	

Task-and-finish work

The Panel has agreed that its work programme for 2022/23 should include a piece of focussed task-and-finish work on early intervention activity in Northamptonshire. The working group established for this purpose needs to meet to produce a draft scope for approval by the Panel. A meeting for this purpose has been scheduled for 1st September 2022. The outcomes of this meeting can be presented to the Panel meeting on 8th September 2022.

Briefings / Training (open to all Panel members)

1. Briefing sessions with the Chief Constable and with the Chief Fire Officer on their organisations' operating environment, priorities and challenges. To take place at least once during the year.
2. A briefing session on the development of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's proposed precepts for 2023/24.
3. A briefing session on road safety strategy in Northamptonshire and supporting activities.
4. A briefing session on learning from complaints about Northamptonshire Police.

Further Information

(A) Statutory Business

PFCC's Annual Report and Fire & Rescue Statement – The Police, Fire & 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 & Crime Plan. The PFCC is also required to publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the priorities set out in the Fire & Rescue National Framework for England. The Panel must review and report on both the Annual Report and Fire & Rescue Statement as soon as practicable after they are received.

PFCC's proposed Police and Fire & 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 & Crime Plan. The Delivery Update also includes contextual information about Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service performance.

PFCC's Budget 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 & 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 monitoring report – 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.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

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	15/08/2022
West S151 (for West and joint papers)	Martin Henry	31/08/2022

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Record of the outcome of Informal Resolution

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report is intended to provide the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel with an update on complaints and conduct matters relating to the Police, Fire & 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 April – August 2022 no new complaints or conduct matters relating to the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner were recorded. One existing complaint was subject to Informal Resolution by the Panel's Complaints Sub Committee. 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 & 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 & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints & Misconduct) Regulations 2012 set out certain responsibilities on Police & Crime Panels for dealing with complaints against Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Deputy Police & 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 & 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 14th April 2022, reporting the position for September 2021 – March 2022. This update report therefore covers the period April – August 2022.
- 6.2 As noted in paragraph 2.1 above, no new complaints or conduct matters have been recorded during the period covered by this update report. One existing complaint was subject to Informal Resolution by the Panel’s Complaints Sub Committee during this period, having been recorded at the end of the previous period. The record of the outcome of the Informal Resolution is 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 & Social Responsibility Act 2011

The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012

Police & Crime Panel Regulations: Non-Criminal Complaints and Misconduct – Home Office Guidance

Police & Crime Panels: Handling Complaints about the Police & Crime Commissioner and their Deputy – Local Government Association Guidance

Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel Rules of Procedure

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Outcomes of Informal Resolution by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel Complaints Sub Committee of a complaint concerning the conduct of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire

Reference	Date recorded	Nature of the case made by the complainant (summary)	Actions taken	Outcome(s) of Informal Resolution
01/2022	22/03/2022	The complainant contended that the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) had not dealt with the complainant effectively or fairly in relation to complaints they had made about Northamptonshire Police.	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 18 th May 2022 and completed Informal Resolution of the complaint.	<p>The Complaints Sub Committee considered information relating to the complaint about the PFCC provided to it by the complainant and by the PFCC. As a result, the Sub Committee made recommendations relating to OPFCC business processes concerning correspondence and complaints. The Sub Committee took the view that the information available to it did not provide sufficient grounds to substantiate the overall complaint.</p> <p>The PFCC wrote to the Sub Committee on 14th June 2022 providing assurances about the OPFCC business processes that were the subject of its recommendations.</p>

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