

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel held at Maybin Room, One Angel Square, Angel Street, Northampton NN1 1ED on Thursday 1 December 2022 at 1.00 pm.

Present Councillor Gill Mercer (Chair)
 Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Adam Brown
 Councillor Jon-Paul Carr
 Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
 Councillor David Smith
 Mrs Anita Shields
 Miss Pauline Woodhouse

Substitute Councillor Muna Cali
Members:

Apologies Councillor Zoe McGhee
for Councillor Russell Roberts
Absence: Councillor Ken Pritchard
 Councillor Winston Strachan

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

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

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Strachan, Pritchard and McGhee. Councillor Strachan was substituted by Councillor Cali.

Apologies for non-attendance were also received from substitutes Councillors Lee, Jelley and Irwin.

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

None received.

97. **Declarations of Interest**

None Declared.

98. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting and reminded the panel:

- Members were advised that whilst a decision had been made at the meeting of 8 September 2022 to hold pre-meetings, it had been considered adding another pre-meeting into an extremely busy calendar would have been onerous. Pre-meetings would be diarised in advance for future Panel meetings
- Councillors Mercer and Shields had attended the annual national conference for Police & Crime Panels in November and the Panel received an overview of the event

99. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel meeting held on 8 September 2022 be approved.

Matters arising from the minutes:

- The Chair had written to the new policing minister at the Home Office concerning delays in the completion of external audits and awaited a response
- An opportunity for Panel members to observe the Stop and Search working group would be organised.

100. **Independent Custody Visitors Scheme in Northamptonshire**

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) advised that the delivery of the Independent Custody Visitors Scheme (ICVS) in Northamptonshire was a statutory duty for all Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC's). The scheme assisted the PFCC in holding the Chief Constable to account ensuring the mutual protection of detainees and the local police and providing reassurance to the community. The ICVS success was reflected by the attainment of a silver level in the National Quality Assurance Framework and was nationally recognised as a model of good practice. The PFCC extended the invitation to members to attend and view the ICVS process in person.

The Panel considered the report and members made the following points during the course of their discussion:

- The PFCC was asked to clarify how Northamptonshire Police dealt with children who commit crimes
- What is the average tenure of the volunteers?
- It was good to see the detainees were consulted
- Visits had decreased during the report period
- The PFCC was asked to clarify how the Force provide inclusion for the multicultural society of Northamptonshire

- Community Volunteers may be able to assist with providing a translation service
- The Deputy Chair agreed that the county had an excellent source of volunteers and invited the PFCC to contact the West Northamptonshire Council Chairman's office to consider options for celebrating their service.

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

- Should children commit crimes they would be dealt with through the agreed Local Authority Partnership arrangements and not be in placed custody. The youngest detainee in custody would be in the age bracket 18-34
- Some of the volunteers were long standing as they tended to cease only when their circumstances changed. Volunteers were recruited in tranches and a successful recruitment process had revealed a number of quality applicants which had resulted in retaining additional volunteers, bringing the service above capacity with 24 volunteers. To assist staff retention they would be implementing staff mentoring schemes
- The reduction in numbers of visiting periods had been the result of a diminished pool of voluntary staff. The recruitment process had remedied that
- Schemes like the ICVS fostered public trust and confidence in the service, as evidenced in the detainees' responses about their experience
- The Force had access to a National Translation Helpline which assisted with a translation service and would aim to provide 'on site' translation through the recruitment process
- The PFCC suggest that the Local Authority and the Force should recognise the knowledge and talent of volunteers and celebrate in a combined event

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel notes the overview of the operation of the Independent Custody Visitors Scheme in Northamptonshire.
- b) The Panel records its thanks to the volunteers involved in the Independent Custody Visitors Scheme for their work.

101. **Police, Fire & Crime Plan Delivery Update**

The PFCC presented the report, and highlighted the following points:

- The recently published MICFRS report on vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the police service and raised national concerns. Northamptonshire Police had been addressing the issues highlighted in the report over the past two years and had made progress
- He had invested in additional resources for the vetting unit; 2 additional staff members and a new software system to enhance the data matching process to identify unwarranted and inappropriate behaviours. The internal reporting was an indication of a cultural change within the Force
- The PFCC had 56 days, from publication, in which to respond to the HMICFRS report. The Chief Constable would present a paper to the PFCC at the next accountability board meeting, accepting recommendations, a plan for mitigating risk and delivering change. Chief Constables would be required to implement plans by the end of April 2023 and the PFCC would update the panel on progress at a subsequent meeting

- Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service were carrying out a joint estates review, on all buildings to provide best value in the current economic climate. The review would inform and shape future joint working
- Review of the maintenance provision was also to be undertaken

The Panel considered the Report and members made the following points during the course of their discussion:

- Further information was sought about the new approach on the Joint Workshop building and the implications regarding the change of direction
- What was the estimated return from the disposal of police boxes identified by the Chief Constable, and could the income be used to support other projects?
- On the sale of the buildings, had consideration been given working with the local authorities through One Public Eye Estate to utilise sites for social housing and other projects
- Safer Nights Out (SNO) Van work should be shared with the panel
- The HMICFRS report had reported unacceptable behaviours on a national level, the PFCC had to address this within Northamptonshire
- The importance of reviewing the transformational project for estates was emphasised
- Members considered the two surveys currently being conducted with members of the public and Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) and OPFCC staff and queried, the frequency, trends emerging, support organisations for staff
- Members expressed concern and received reassurance regarding the Accountability Board, November 2022 Major Crime Figures
- The PFCC was questioned whether he was now satisfied that Northamptonshire was getting good value from the East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU)
- Road safety education was being addressed at an early stage to improve driving skills and invited the PFCC to comment further on road safety
- Road safety was a particular issue near schools. A collaboration of Highways, the school and the police could assess the problem and form a plan of action to address and mitigate the risks
- Members considered whether the Operation REPEAT initiative sponsored by the Cadent Gas, to prevent doorstep crime, could be extended beyond training care workers.

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

- The building had been purchased for the joint workshop however inflation had impacted financially on the PFCC and the cost of delivery of the joint workshop projects had unacceptably increased from £6 million to £16 million leading to reassessment of the project delivery. The PFCC remained committed to delivery of joint maintenance
- The sale of the police boxes would not produce significant capital receipts and these were already committed to the capital programme
- Due to the nature of shared buildings sharing utilities the disposal of estates had required dialogued with Local Authorities (LA). Corby, was a dual site, was open and would welcome support from the LA. The new police fire call

centre may bring opportunities to work with LA. He was supportive of improvements through joint working with local authorities on estates in order to provide a better value service to the public

- The SNO van had been commissioned by the PFCC and had now operated for 12 months in partnership with Northampton Guardians, which had now formed a charity for this purpose. They had recently been presented with an award for their work, the group had volunteered 5000 hours over a 12 month period and assisted over 1000 people. This initiative, Operation Kayak, provision of training with Pubs and Clubs in conjunction with Rape Crisis were all examples of action in Northamptonshire that had improved night-time safety
- A second SNO van had been purchased for the North of the County. The OPFCC continued to work with The Guardians in conjunction with the street pastors to ensure safer nights out and reduced the visit to Accident and Emergency
- Procedures had been put in place by Northamptonshire Police to address unacceptable behaviours, robust approach, improved vetting, improve trust. To foster trust and to maximise responses, a decision had been made, to commission, a one off, independent IPSOS survey to be sent out to staff. Responses would be anonymous and would identify key areas for concern. The HMICFRS report for Northamptonshire had identified areas for improvement and the survey would identify targeted areas for improvement. The PFCC commended and thanked the team members for their support to form the survey
- The OPFCC would be launching the Flare App, a tool for members of the public to use to report areas or behaviours that caused them to feel unsafe. Collation of this data would help the Force to develop a picture of trends and target areas of concern
- New Independent Panel Members had been recruited to the Customer Service Team and the Chair, recruited to serve on gross misconduct hearing panels. This responsibility was subject to a wider debate with the Home Office and the determination regarding dismissal could revert to the Chief Constable for a more robust response to tackling inappropriate actions of officers. In Northamptonshire DIP sampling had always been carried out on Police Standards Department files. The OPFCC was leading the way nationally on customer complaints and the Force was now keeping pace
- Questions about EMSOU performance raised at the Police Accountability Board in November 2022 related to specific functions. This was a complex area but the PFCC reassured the Panel that he considered that Northamptonshire was getting value for money and he would continue to scrutinise this. A briefing on EMSOU could be organised for the Panel
- He commended the young people involved in making the new My Pink Trainers road safety film, which was very powerful. He could arrange to show the film to the panel. The PFCC had commissioned a multi-year programme to work with young drivers to improve their road safety awareness. The biggest risk to life in Northamptonshire was on the roads and partners needed to do more collectively to address this
- He commended the work of the officers that had been put into Operation REPEAT. The scheme had been extended for another term. He could consider scope to broaden involvement and the Panel's suggestion to extend the training

- The ONS had identified Northamptonshire as the only area in the country where crime had decreased in the last year. Initiatives to raise awareness and implementation of preventative measures had collectively contributed to this result together with the Force's response to crime
- The Force had run campaigns to raise awareness regarding parking and the requirement for emergency vehicles to have access near schools and offered support should a collaborative approach be required to address the risks in specific areas.

The Director for Early Intervention, Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer made the following points during the course of the discussion:

- Two surveys would be undertaken; a survey to assess the general community perceptions of safety and an independent and anonymous IPSOS survey to be sent to all staff with including questions relating to their workplace, working environment, work relationships. Staff would not provide any personal identifiers within the survey. The exercise was not scheduled to be repeated. Throughout the staff survey there were links and references to support groups should staff require additional support through the process.

Councillor Cali left the meeting during this Agenda item.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel notes the report.
- b) The Panel requests the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to arrange a briefing for Panel members on the East Midlands Special Operations Unit.
- c) The Panel requests the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to present a report to a future Panel meeting on action taken in Northamptonshire to implement the recommendations of the HMICFRS inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service.

102. **Fire & Rescue Authority Finance Update**

The PFCC presented the report and provided an overview of the forecast financial outturn for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, anticipated challenges, the pre-budget settlement engagement, and an update on the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts.

The PFCC highlighted, that the date of the settlement for 2023/24 was not yet known. The plans for the public consultation had therefore mirrored previous years. The financial context for 2023/24 involved significant challenges. A budget briefing session for Panel members could be organised as in previous years with 17th January 2023 as the proposed date.

The Panel considered the report and the PFCC, in response to questions stated that:

- The government had not yet confirmed the Council Tax referendum threshold. The Chief Finance Officer was pursuing this
- The Police and Fire & Rescue elements of the precept only accounted for 18% of the local tax take. However, it was incumbent on the PFCC, when increasing the precept, to provide a full explanation for the reasons for the rise,

particularly in the current financial climate. The FBU strike action and pay review had been taken into account in the calculations but the increase would only meet, in part, the pay offer of 5%

- Continued transformation of services to make efficiencies and the identification of additional income streams would be part of managing the budget environment. Further information could be provided to Panel members at the proposed budget briefing in January
- There was a contingency plan for dealing with strike action. Should notification be received from the FBU the plan would be modified accordingly, to take account of the actual scenario.

The Chief Finance Officer, in response questions stated that:

- Whilst OPFCC had been in dialogue with the Home Office, seeking an increase of £5, and the Home Office being supportive, it was not at their discretion to grant. Therefore it was anticipated the Fire and Rescue precept might be limited to a 2.99% increase. The OPFCC was modelling both scenarios.
- The Moulton Lodge logistics centre was currently let on a short-term basis to the East Midlands Ambulance Service. If further work on estates identified that the building was no longer required a longer term let could be considered.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel notes the report.
- b) The Panel agrees that a briefing session for Panel members on the development of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's proposed precepts for 2023/24 be held on 17 January 2023.

103. **Policing Finance Update**

The PFCC presented the report, which provided a high-level overview of the future financial challenges of Northamptonshire Police and highlighted that the Force was subject to the same economic pressures facing all public bodies, households and businesses across the country.

The Panel considered the report and the PFCC provided additional information in response to points raised by members during the course of discussion as follows:

- Due to the delay in the recruitment to the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) roles, the PFCC had agreed with the Chief Constable that the underspends in the year that related to vacant PCSO posts, would be ringfenced for neighbourhoods and was transferred to reserves. It was anticipated that the funds would be spent in communities that did not have PCSO's in place
- Post pandemic, there remained a manufacturing and supply issue with obtaining goods from China resulting in severe delays and had increased the costs of maintenance on vehicles, which had contributed to the overspend in Enabling Services
- Key to dealing with financial challenges was good management. The Force had implemented and would continue to explore options for cutting costs and increasing efficiencies

- The utilisation of buildings was continually monitored. Access to the Force through front counters was encouraged however they could be located in a public building that was readily accessible to the community and would continue to look at the options
- The estates review was expected to be completed in 6 months. Northamptonshire's top priority was to obtain the right building for a new control room. It was acknowledged that this may exceed the anticipated time expectation for resolution
- Recruitment had been delayed due to vacancies in Early Intervention and Youth Provision consultation and the restructuring of services. Specialist roles required the right candidates. It made sense in the current financial context to retain funding reserves
- The PFCC purchased two beat buses to support community engagement and had a plan to see a regular programme where they were deployed to rural areas and within communities with low representation. The development of neighbourhood policing and use of PCSO's represented other actions that build connections with local communities. Northamptonshire was building on leading work done by Humberside on this issue
- The PFCC had a plan to ensure the recruitment of PCSO's and the budget would be returned to the Chief Constable's budget when the posts filled

The Chief Finance Officer provided additional information in response to points raised by members during the course of discussion as follows:

- The overspend on the Enabling Services budget lines was indicative of the impact of inflation on costs incurred relating to buildings, transport, fuel and people
- The Ministry of Justice had committed to 2 year funding for Voice, which would be received by the PFCC but, the Ministry had not committed funding beyond 2023/24. The OPFCC was pushing for a resolution on this matter
- The apparent overspend on the Commissioning & Delivery Services budget reflected additional funding received to support work on domestic violence. A total of £433K had been allocated to various charities, of that sum £422K of extra grants totalling had been received from the Ministry of Justice for Voice and other domestic violence and sexual Violence charities. The balance of the grants allocated went to, Refuse, Information and Support Education (RISE), Northampton Domestic Abuse Services (NDAS) and eve Domestic Abuse organisation
- The current position on reserves was in keeping with the reserves strategy which would be updated and presented to the Panel as part of the 2023/24 budget. Reserves would support managing risks, providing some investment to smooth over pressures if required.

The Director for Early Intervention, Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer, provided additional information in response to points raised by members during the course of discussion as follows:

- The service delivery had remained consistent for Early Intervention and Youth Provision. The budget position reflected projected staffing levels and contained vacant new posts, resulting in an underspend. It was expected that 2023/24 may show a smaller underspend.

RESOLVED that: the Panel notes the report.

104. **Appointment of Chief Constable**

The PFCC provided a verbal update regarding the appointment of the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police, and advised:

- The appointment of a Chief Constable was one of his most important decisions as the as the PFCC
- The Panel was required to review and make a report on the proposed appointment of a Chief Constable by the PFCC as one its statutory functions and the PFCC sought to advise the Panel of his intentions and receive the Panel's input
- The 5-year contract for the incumbent Chief Constable, Mr Nick Adderley, would end in August 2023
- He had considered options to address this situation. As PFCC he strongly believed that Mr Adderley was the right leader for the Force. Mr Adderley had demonstrated effective leadership and had created the best conditions for the force to continue to make progress
- A policing career was structured around a 30 year term. That expectation resulted in complex tax and pension rules which could affect pension benefits and be financially detrimental for an officer to continue to serve
- He had agreed with Mr Adderley that, subject to confirmation by the Panel, he would be offered a new contract to continue as Chief Constable, with a break in service of around a month to permit him to be engaged with an abated pension
- Recruitment to senior officer posts was currently proving significantly challenging leading to roles being filled on a temporary basis
- He firmly believed that Mr Adderley was the right person to remain in post to help continue to deliver the improvements and the plans for policing across Northamptonshire and strengthen links between the Force and the community
- It was a requirement of the police force to have an appointed Chief Constable and the PFCC would seek an external candidate for an interim appointment to cover Mr Adderley's retirement period
- The Panel was requested to hold confirmation hearings for both of these proposed appointments. It was the intention to hold the confirmation hearings act at the earliest convenience, with both hearings being held on the same day.

The Panel considered the verbal update and members made the following points during the course of the discussion:

- The Force was performing well and the incumbent Chief Constable had a good working relationship with the PFCC
- The PFCC's proposed course of action for recruitment should be endorsed
- It was encouraged that the length of contract and remuneration should best support the retention of the Chief Constable

- An elevated remuneration for the 2.5year term may reflect the experience, responsibility and success of the incumbent Chief Constable should the contract be renewed
- It was questioned whether the proposed appointment of Mr Adderley would be for another 5 year contract
- Further information was sought about the financial implications of appointing an interim Chief Constable and why these would be necessary if the Panel was to confirm the proposed appointment of Mr Adderley
- The PFCC was encouraged to ensure that Mr Adderley's retirement period did not coincide with the British Grand Prix, given the size of the associated police operation
- Confirmation was sought that Mr Adderley was agreeable to the PFCC's proposed approach.

In response to members questions the PFCC added:

- He would write to the Panel following the current meeting to provide formal notification of the proposed appointments. The OPFCC would liaise with the Panel to enable confirmation hearings to take place promptly
- The proposed contract for Mr Adderley would be for two years with options to extend further. This was intended to reflect that Mr Adderley's position might change in future and the PFCC could change at the next election
- The remuneration for a Chief Constable could only be reviewed at the point of offering a new contract. Supporting information about the candidates would be provided to the Panel when considering the proposed appointments
- The Force was required to have a Chief Constable in post therefore the PFCC would recruit an interim Chief Constable to cover the break in service by Mr Adderley. Northamptonshire would not be paying for two Chief Constables.
- A constructive conversation had taken place with the Mr Adderley and he was enthusiastic and committed to seeing the projects and initiative that had been put in place in the Force through to conclusion.

In response to Members questions The Director for Early Intervention, Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer added:

- The purpose of the update was to set out the PFCC's intentions and to be open about the use of pension abatement. The Panel was not being asked to give a way about the proposed appointments at the current meeting
- There was a precedent use of pension abatement in policing.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised the Panel on the statutory requirement and timescales relating to the confirmation hearing process following the receipt of formal notification of a proposed appointment from the PFCC.

RESOLVED that: the Panel supports the approach to the appointment of a Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police outlined by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- The Panel had agreed to set up working group for the topic of Early Intervention. Due to availability and scheduling issues the first meeting had been delayed and would meet on 15 December 2022
- The Panel were invited to consider their preference of venue for subsequent meetings

The Panel considered the report. The Chair highlighted that pre-meetings needed to be arranged ahead of future Panel meetings as previously agreed by the Panel. Panel members gave further consideration to the merits of this approach and the following points were raised during the course of discussion:

- Pre-meetings would give Panel members the opportunity to identify particular points, issues to highlight at the meeting and give the Panel an opportunity to form structured questions addressing common themes
- Pre-meetings with the PFCC, Chair and Deputy were diarised prior to each Panel meeting
- Views and questions could be co-ordinated, in writing, ahead of each Panel meeting
- Views and questions could be co-ordinated in writing ahead of Panel meetings
- Additional meetings were not an effective use of time
- A balance approach should be taken. Where specific topics needed to be discussed a briefing session could be held
- Views could be sent to the Chair enabling them to channel questions to the OPFCC or collate questions ahead of Panel meetings
- If the Panel was to hold pre-meetings it would be beneficial for meeting agenda papers to be available earlier.

The Panel went on to raise the following points during the course of discussion:

- The Early intervention Working Group may require an extension of time in which to complete the task
- A briefing session with the Chief Fire Officer should be sought now that he had been in post for a sufficient period of time
- With the number of changes being made to both services more frequent briefings, from both the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer, may be appropriate.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel agrees that communication ahead of Panel meetings should be done by email instead of holding pre-meetings.
- b) The Panel requests that a briefing session for Panel members with the Chief Fire Officer on Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's current priorities, challenges and performance be arranged.
- c) The Panel agrees that it should seek to have briefing sessions with the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer more frequently than once a year.

106. **Urgent Business**

There was none.

The meeting closed at 3.58 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____