

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

15 JUNE 2023

Report Title	Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel's statutory responsibilities relating to review of the Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement for 2022/23 produced by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire.
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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report is intended to set out the statutory requirements on the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel to review the Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement for 2022/23 produced by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report summarises the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel's statutory responsibilities relating to reviewing and making a report on the Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement for 2022/23 produced by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire. This Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement appears on the agenda for the current Panel meeting as the next item of business.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel reviews the Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement for 2022/23 produced by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendation is intended to enable the Panel to carry out its statutory responsibilities relating to scrutiny of the Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement effectively at the current meeting.

5. Report Background

Annual Report

- 5.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (sections 12 and 28) states that a Police and Crime Commissioner must produce an “annual report”.
- 5.2 The annual report must report on:
- a) the exercise of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s functions in the financial year, and
 - b) the progress which has been made in the financial year in meeting the police and crime objectives in the police and crime plan.
- 5.3 The annual report must be sent to the relevant Police and Crime Panel as soon as practicable following its publication by the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 5.4 The Police and Crime Panel must arrange a public meeting of the Panel to be held as soon as practicable after the Panel receives the annual report.
- 5.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner must attend the relevant meeting of the Panel to present the report and to answer such questions from the Panel about the report as the Panel members think appropriate.
- 5.6 The Police and Crime Panel must then review the annual report and make a report outlining any recommendations to the Police and Crime Commissioner. The report or recommendations of the Panel must also be published.
- 5.7 The Police and Crime Commissioner must provide a response to the panel and must also publish that response.

Fire and Rescue Statement

- 5.8 The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England sets out the government’s priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. Every fire and rescue authority must have regard to the National Framework in carrying out its functions. Every authority must publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the National Framework, referred to as “the Fire and Rescue Statement”. This requirement applies to Police and Crime commissioners who take on the functions of a fire and rescue authority under the provisions of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, as is the case in Northamptonshire.
- 5.9 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (sections 12 and 28) as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017 Schedule 1 requires that the Fire and Rescue Statement published by a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is subject to scrutiny by the relevant Police, Fire and Crime Panel.
- 5.10 The Fire and Rescue Statement must be sent to the relevant Police, Fire and Crime Panel as soon as practicable following its publication by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.
- 5.11 The Police, Fire and Crime Panel must arrange a public meeting of the Panel to be held as soon as practicable after the Panel receives the Fire and Rescue Statement.
- 5.12 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner must attend the relevant meeting of the Panel to present the Fire and Rescue Statement and to answer such questions from the Panel about it as the Panel members think appropriate.
- 5.13 The Police, Fire and Crime Panel must then review the Fire and Rescue Statement and make a report outlining any recommendations to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. The report or recommendations of the Panel must also be published.
- 5.14 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner must provide a response to the panel and must also publish that response.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire has produced an Annual Report for 2022/23 that also incorporates the Fire and Rescue Statement. This has been sent to the Panel to review, reflecting the requirements summarised in section 5 of this report.
- 6.2 Reviewing and reporting on the Annual Report and the Fire and Rescue Statement are mandatory tasks for the Panel. The Panel should seek to carry out these tasks in accordance with its overall role of scrutinising and supporting the effective exercise by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner of his responsibilities.

- 6.3 Local Government Association guidance for panels on policing and fire governance gives the following advice on good practice relating to reviewing and reporting on the Annual Report:

Scrutiny of the annual report should focus on:

- *understanding whether the objectives set out in the police and crime plan have been met*
- *using panel members' own insight and independently gathered evidence to evaluate whether the commissioner's conclusions on this matter are robust, and*
- *supporting the commissioner to hold the chief constable to account on operational delivery.*

An effective panel annual report session should use the report as a tool to carry out an annual review of the commissioner's activities, looking back at the last year's successes and challenges, and forward to the next year's opportunities and priorities.

A less beneficial session could involve the panel highlighting apparent factual inaccuracies in the annual report, asking for additional narrative information on details or pointing out typographical or grammatical errors. None of these would add value to the effective scrutiny of the commissioner and all of them would represent a poor use of time for everyone involved.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 There are no resources 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 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendation in this report.

8. Background Papers

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

Policing and Crime Act 2017

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Terms of Reference.

Policing and fire governance – Local Government Association guidance for police and crime panels (2019)