

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel held at Jeffrey Room, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton NN1 1DE on Thursday 14 March 2024 at 2.15 pm.

Present:

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

Also Present:

Stephen Mold, Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Vaughan Ashcroft, Interim Chief Finance and Section 151 Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Jonny Bugg, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Deborah Denton, Joint Head of Communications, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Detective Inspector Liam O'Neil, Northamptonshire Police
Augusta Ryan, Senior Practitioner
James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager
Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer
Councillor Danielle Stone
Sam Dobbs, Northants Police Federation
Adam Taylor, East Midlands Executive Council member, Fire Brigades Union

There were also 6 members of the public in attendance.

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Zoe McGhee

228. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillor Zoe McGhee of North Northamptonshire Council and Catherine Whitehead, Director of Legal and Democratic Services of West Northamptonshire Council, the Panel's Monitoring Officer.

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

The Panel was advised that a request to address the meeting on Agenda Item 9, the Policing Finance Update had been received, from Mr Craig Blacha. Mr Blacha was not in attendance and the Chair had agreed that his question could be read out in his absence.

230. **Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

231. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed Reuben Baines from Kingsthorpe College, who was carrying out work experience with the finance team at West Northamptonshire Council.

Advised the Panel that the Complaints procedure would be looked at during consideration of Agenda Item 11, Complaints and Conducts Matters Update and he referred to the recent news article about the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC).

That the meeting was the last scheduled meeting of the Panel in the 2023/24 municipal year and ahead of the PFCC election. The Chair thanked the Panel members for their commitment during an exceptionally busy year.

The Chair advise the Panel that a further letter had been received from the Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire on the subject of holding confirmation hearings for interim appointments by the PFCC and was circulated to Panel members in February. The Minister had endorsed the approach being taken by the Panel.

232. **Minutes**

The Chair advised that the outstanding draft minutes from other recent Panel meetings would be presented for approval at the next Panel meeting on 13 June 2024.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The minutes of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel Confirmation Hearing held in public on 30 November 2023 be approved.
- b) The minutes of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel Confirmation Hearing held in private on 30 November 2023 be approved.

233. **Work of the Youth Violence Intervention Unit in Northamptonshire (Verbal item)**

The PFCC made a statement to the Panel regarding a report in the media about a comment made by him during a recent meeting with firefighters. He explained that in a meeting with a small group of firefighters he was attempting to explain some of the criticism and opposition he had received for his ongoing support of Nikki Watson as the next Chief Fire Officer. He used language he regretted at once. He apologised and referred himself to the Monitoring Officer that same day. The matter was dealt with immediately and a robust reflective meeting was held the next business day. He had said sorry to those directly affected as well as passing his deepest apologies to

all staff and particularly women. He understood the language used was totally unacceptable and wanted to stress that this did not reflect his core values.

The PFCC began his introduction to the work of the Youth Violence Intervention Unit (YVIU) by expressing the importance he placed on innovation and collaboration and the prevention of crime and YVIU were an excellent example of effective collaboration to combat crime and prevent young people entering the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

The PFCC introduced Detective Inspector Liam O'Neil and Augusta Ryan, Senior Early Intervention and Adverse Childhood Experiences Support Officer leading on early intervention who were to provide the briefing on the work of the new YVIU. The unit combined 4 teams working across boundaries, Police Community Support Officers (PCSO), the OPFCC specialist youth team, youth justice workers and Police Officers. It was an example of innovative working within the county to make a real difference to people's lives.

The Chair welcomed Augusta and Liam and mentioned to the Panel he had visited and met the YVIU in Brackmills and recommended that the Panel consider a visit to be included on the work programme.

During the course of the presentation Detective Inspector Liam O'Neil advised that:

- The new YVIU had built on the success of the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) and had developed to adapt to societal changes.
- Focus of the work of the unit was on prevention. In analysing data regarding the 350 most serious offenders in Northamptonshire they had identified that they had become known to the police and partner agencies between the age of 12-16 and early intervention would be required at an earlier age. The unit would focus on the under 18s, which aligned with other agencies to help, support, and divert young people away from criminality. Preventing; serious injury; involvement in activities that may lead to injury or death; reducing the impact on the families and communities by focussing on appropriate interventions.
- They would use information from the data analytics source, the Observatory, who gathered information from the police and other partner agencies to target their work to make the biggest impact with the resources available.
- Focussing on under 18s enabled the unit to align their work with partner organisations, social care, the youth offending services, health, and education.
- The department consisted of 4 teams.
 - a) The PCSOs would look at children 8-12 year olds identified as at risk, they would deal with families, link with the schools and provide information, with the aim of diverting the child from criminal activity.
 - b) The CIRV pathway team were specialist Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and Early Intervention (EI) workers. An independent team working with 13-17 year olds to keep them from criminality and provide correct pathways. The team worked alongside Police Officers.
 - c) They had identified that young people were resistant to working with CIRV, Police Officers or professional agencies. A team of Police Officers were looking at ways to create engagement opportunities with this group of youths to get support and divert them from criminality.

- d) Youth Offending Services (YOS) officers provided the statutory function in the youth offending service and they would be utilised to identify areas of best practice when children come to the attention of the Police. To achieve their aim of diverting children away from criminality at an earlier stage and to disseminate that learning to all Police Officers.
- Intervention, they would be working with the specialist ACE and EI workers and the Senior Manager would provide further information.

During the course of the presentation the Senior Early Intervention and Adverse Childhood Experiences Support Officer advised that:

- There were 5 EI and ACE workers within the YVIU, the unit was funded and supported by the OPFCC, and their role was to engage and work with the 13-17 year olds.
- Each worker would have a case load of approximately 10 young people.
- Historically the 13-17 age group had disengaged because the prevention work was being carried out by Police Officers. The ACE workers had been brought in to break down those barriers to enable support to be provided to both the child and the families to identify what the parents needs were, taking a multiagency approach, working with social workers, youth offending colleagues and partners in education to make positive changes.

Detective Inspector Liam O'Neil added that:

- YOS worked with children who had a referral through the courts but would also help with the out of court disposals, children who were eligible for a youth conditional caution or a youth caution. The aim was to harness their skills and to inform other officers in carrying out their work with children.
- They were delivering inputs to families and schools regarding knife crime, problem solving and relationships.

The Senior Early Intervention and Adverse Childhood Experiences Support Officer added that:

- Free, monthly, online Webinars, which focussed on child exploitation, were being run by the EI and ACE officers and were available for parents and carers to attend. The Webinars provided the signs to look for in terms of child exploitation. The Webinars were run in collaboration with the Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation (RISE) and the Missing Persons colleagues. Originally launched in February 2024, the attendance was steadily rising.

Detective Inspector Liam O'Neil continued:

- They were exploring ways to address early intervention. PCSOs would be visiting schools, providing information on knife crime, speak to families and assist to link families that need support, with social care, education, and health.
- The disruption team would be looking at the 13-17 year olds who don't engage but may require support and guidance to steer them away from criminality.
- They aimed to direct the maximum number of people away from criminal exploitation and the risk of becoming involved in something serious.
- The PCSO team were the best resource to carry out this function.

The Senior Early Intervention and Adverse Childhood Experiences Support Officer provided an example of a 15 year male who had entered custody, arrested for possession with intent to supply and had been assisted by the YVIU:

- He was visited in custody and accepted support.

- Within 48 hours of being released from custody he received a visit, with his parent where it was identified he had been permanently excluded from education for a year without an education setting: circumstances which had increased his risks of being exploited.
- The Police Force recognised he was a victim of exploitation and made an immediate referral to the national referral mechanism to protect young people from exploitation.
- He was previously known for anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and assault.
- He was allocated an EI and ACE support officer who worked with the family. They organised his education and liaised with the local authority. Funding available from the OFPCC with Northampton Saints Foundation, and he was promptly attending their engagement programme, 2 days per week.
- 12 weekly sessions of mentoring were arranged with the mentoring partners that work within the YVIU, programme EXODUS.
- He agreed to wear a Buddy Tracker, he felt wearing it would assist him move away from the exploiters.
- With support of the Mum, to further assist in breaking the ties, he was moved out of home to a new area with a family member. That enabled the team to carry out 1-2-1 sessions with him. The sessions covered the risks of knife crime, healthy friendships and relationships and sexual health interventions. He found the tool, road journey map impactful which enabled him to consider his ACEs and how they had impacted on him, enabled him to address trauma in his life. Mum had also found the road journey map a positive experience too.
- The parent had attended the exploitation Webinar which reinforced the learning she had experienced with the ACE officer.
- Worked with the local authority and secured an education setting, he was attending and able to complete his GCSE exams and would be returning to the Northampton Saints Foundation attending the 16+ HITZ programme in September 2024. It was further planned that he would also be taken on a mentor and would have an apprenticeship after he had completed the HITZ programme.
- He returned to living with his parent, no longer associated with the risky peers, was not being exploited, there were no further crimes or intelligence to suggest he was reassociating. He participated in the launch of the team, he was doing well and the feedback about the support, from both him and his parent was very positive.

Detective Inspector Liam O'Neil added that the YVIU aimed to prevent young people getting involved in criminal activities, with the Serious Violence Duty (SVD), it was one aspect that was being carried out to protect the County. He expressed the hope the partnership organisations would join them to enable more intervention work to be carried out.

The Chair thanked the presenters and remarked on the importance of their early intervention and prevention work with the youth.

Councillor Baker introduced herself as the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and advised the presenters that she sat on the board of the partnership organisations identified in their presentation.

Panel members considered these matters during the course of discussion:

- The YVIU was advised to contact the local area partnerships who would be able to provide valuable information regarding local issues in Northamptonshire. They were opening family hubs and the first family hub was to be opened in Towcester.
- Early Intervention was considered the key to success.
- Young people excluded from schools were vulnerable to exploitation.
- The geographical extent of the work carried out by YVIU.
- The positive outcomes of the work of the YVIU.
- The preference of young people to not deal with uniformed officers.
- The effects of mental health on young people and how YVIU linked with Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- How YVIU would be able to measure its impact on young people, on crime rates and its overall success.
- The number of children excluded from school in North Northamptonshire and the early age at which children were exposed to alcohol and substance abuse. How YVIU would be signposted to absentee children and how they would extend their support and advised that it was the local authorities' responsibility to look after those children.
- The improvement and extent of the inclusivity of the partnership arrangements.
- Northamptonshire was a diverse community, whether the recording of referrals could identify key factors, e.g. the ethnicity of children, to identify specific needs. With a high proportion of young black children excluded from education would YVIU team be able to negotiate the family dynamics.
- The benefit of involving industry to provide apprenticeships to follow on from the good work of the YVIU team.

In response to members' questions Detective Inspector Liam O'Neil advised:

- YVIU was a county resource with teams based out of Northampton and Kettering.
- YVIU was a non-uniformed service. Uniforms were considered to create a barrier.
- Measured success would be noticeable in the long-term.
- They would be able to analyse data from the Police data analytics team to measuring the impact on young people. The data would identify the recurrence rate.
- How to measure the YVIU's impact on crime rates required further consideration.
- The YVIU had limited resources and were only able to assist a limited number of young people. An increase in funding would enable the resources available to increase.
- Every week the team triage the young people, apply a risk factor score to enable them to prioritise the higher risk children to work with.

- YOS deal with the referral orders, the YVIU help write reports for the courts and include how they have supported and worked with the CIRV pathway and what had been done to improve their situation.
- The scope of the children affected was huge and using the data analytics they would be able to target their resources appropriately. 8-12 year olds was an area where it was felt would benefit most.
- Work was ongoing in the Force in relation to the Serious Violence Duty, a strategic needs assessment had been completed. The YVIU was one part of a solution to a societal issue, the aspiration was for other agencies and professionals to become partners to assist in achieving the goal of providing long-term support. An agency had received funding from the youth endowment fund, over the next 3 years they would provide 12 month mentorship to approximately 600 young people in Northamptonshire.
- He agreed that the make-up of the YVIU needed to reflect the different cultures in society and could be improved. They had a member in the team that had strong connections with the community and other agencies and had brought in the Frank Bruno Foundation to provide boxing opportunities for young people.

In response to members' questions the Senior Manager advised:

- When a referral was received the first person to handle the referral would be an EI or ACE officer. A non-uniformed officer would make first contact with the family, the partners, and the young person. A young person who accepted assistance would be assisted by the same officer to provide consistency.
- Referrals can be made through various avenues, parents can self-refer, Police Officers, Education, Social Care, YOS. With the majority being made through Education. YOS may consider that a young person approaching the end of their order to still be at risk the YVIU would pick them up.
- Custody had a 'golden hour'. YVIU are notified when young people enter custody, if they consider the person should be worked with, the unit would make the referral.
- Mental health was a significant issue, they had access to liaison and diversion colleagues in custody which had a positive benefit to the YVIU team. If YVIU had been unable to access services like CAMHS for the young person in custody their colleagues had brought pressure to bear to access those services.
- Feedback forms were sent out to young people to assess how the unit had affected and changed their lives.
- They used a risk factor matrix to measure and assess that the young person's risks had reduced through an assessment document but also recorded signs of safety which enabled them to assess positive outcomes.
- To reflect changing needs of the County, a pathway had been created to address problem areas with the 8-12 age group and already showed positive outcomes. It was usually siblings of young person already in the CIRV pathway or where parents have a history of substance abuse where the ACE experiences have impacted them.
- Children absent from education would be picked up by referrals from education. The EI team, the ACEs team and the YVIU all liaised and worked in a multi-agency, multi-departmental approach.

- In guiding young people to make better friendship choices the team utilised different tactics. An info map enabled them to identify friendships, discuss the healthiness of the relationship, and then enabled the team to look at diversions to find positive friendships and gave examples of boxing, gym membership, CBT motorcycle course. They worked with EXODUS and SURVIVAL. The diversions were tailored to the individual young person who required support.

In response to members questions the PFCC advised:

- A pilot had been carried out which identified 106 children the pilot had been very successful and could be presented as national best practice. Two significant reasons identified by young people for them leaving home were mental health and bad parenting.
- EXODUS upskills, was a national organisation that had received funding from the youth endowment fund. They had chosen two locations to carry out the work, Northamptonshire had been chosen because of the positive outcomes of the existing work.
- The strategic needs assessment had received a complement from the Home Office.
- The work was making a difference, compared to figures 1 year ago, young people involved in serious violence had reduced from 500 to 420, knife crime had reduced by 20%, the long-term investment was having an effect.

The Chair advised the panel that the work of EXODUS was to be audited and it would provide proven outcomes and provide comparison information for benchmarking purposes.

RESOLVED that: the Panel requests that a visit to the Youth Violence Intervention Unit be organised for Panel members.

234. **Police, Fire and Crime Plan Delivery Update**

The Chair invited the Democratic Services Assistant Manager to provide a guide and clarity to the Panel regarding its role in relation to complaints about the conduct of the PFCC.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that all Police and Crime Panels had general responsibilities, scrutinising specific functions of the PFCC and a wider range of responsibility to review and scrutinise decision made, or actions taken by the PFCC in the discharge of his functions. An additional function for the Panel related to complaints about the conduct of the PFCC.

Complaints reported about the PFCC were processed through the relevant Panel or delegated party, the Monitoring Officer for West Northamptonshire Council, responsible for making a decision whether a purported complaint would be recorded. A complaint of a serious nature, which appeared to constitute a criminal offence, would be referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct to investigate. Other recorded complaints would be dealt with locally through the process of informal resolution through the complaints sub-committee. Regular Complaints and Conduct Matters reports were presented to the Panel. The Panel were not in a position to act

on a matter relating to the conduct of the PFCC until a complaint had been received. There was provision in the legislation to act relating to conduct matters, which were defined as a matter where there was an indication, whether through circumstances or otherwise, that the PFCC had committed a criminal offence.

The Chair invited the PFCC to introduce the Police, Fire and Crime Plan Delivery Update.

The PFCC commenced by advising he would provide two verbal updates after the report:

- Angiolini Inquiry. Significant impact on public confidence and provide an outline what has been done in Northamptonshire. Ivan Balhatchet, Acting Chief Constable and Liz Wilcox, Head of Professional Standards Department (PSD) had attended and
- The estates masterplan which would be circulated to the Panel.

The PFCC presented the Police, Fire and Crime Plan Delivery Update and highlighted the following points:

- The update presented to the Panel provided a comprehensive review of recent work being undertaken to deliver the priorities set out in the plan.
- The report included innovative work carried out by diverting young people entering the CJS, improving street safety and supporting victims of crime.
- Northamptonshire was safer, the County had more police than at any other time. Work was being done in neighbourhoods on county wide policing challenges.
- The innovative way of reforming and combining the enabling services had improved efficiency and professionalism for all.
- The latest Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) report undertaken by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found that Northamptonshire Police had made improvements in 6 of the 9 areas of work measured. And highlighted that the Force was outstanding in the way it records crime. Where areas of improvement were identified the PFCC advised that investment had been provided. In crime investigation, £600,000 had been committed towards further training and development of Police Officers. £800,000 would be invested in the control room to help meet the growing demand in emergency calls from the public.
- The PFCC asked that his thank you was recorded for all the Police Officers and staff, they should be proud that Northamptonshire was considered an innovative and forward-thinking force that could meet the needs of a growing County.
- On crime, Northamptonshire's reputation had brought opportunity and had brought in new government investment approximately £17million for safer streets, antisocial behaviour, hot spots and immediate justice and violence reduction. An additional £3million of funding was assisting with tackling antisocial behaviour, drug taking, criminal damage, public nuisance, shop lifting and dealing with drunk and disorderly people.
- The OPFCC had won the National Public Cyber Award for pioneering work carried out in the cyber security forum.

- The National Police Chiefs Council had recognised Northamptonshire's success for making spaces safer award, a joint initiative between the OPFCC and the Police Force. The PFCC identified the key element being Operation Kayak, a policing initiative to keep people safe on weekend nights out and funded as a pilot by the PFCC subsequently adopted as a core operational activity. The award had also recognised the effectiveness of the Safer Nights Out (SNO) vans and the technological innovations, FLARE App and the ID Scan technology at all late night venues across the county.
- The OPFCC had been successful in securing bids for £5million from the safer streets fund for crime prevention enabling crime reduction schemes across the County. Schemes included the provision of CCTV cameras, homes provided with £100 worth of free security, installation of alley gates, provision of replacement front and back doors. An additional £1.3million had been awarded to help implement innovative crime prevention measures in the night-time economies and to keep women and girls safer.
- The importance placed on collaborative working in the media and advised that Northamptonshire had led in driving improvements in that area with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS).
- The report demonstrated that financial stability had been brought to the NFRS and the effects of this was visible on the front line. With an increase in whole-time fire fighters, and a £10million capital investment programme, providing fire fighters with modern equipment, services, and ways of working. This included 12 next generation fire engines, a new 42 metre turntable ladder which improved the services ability to deal with large scale incidents.
- NFRS had led the way in gaining recognition, with a strong reputation at National Government, Home Office strategy and finance teams regular sought their advice and the cross-government emergency services interoperability programme.
- Home safety and safeguarding team had received a prevention of the year award with 6,000 home safety visits being carried out.
- NFRS had been subject of an improvement plan and the PFCC wished to public thank the officers and staff of the service who had worked with the PFCC and the OPFCC to drive the changes and improve conditions and improve the services provided.
- The report provided the Panel with an update of the work delivered but also demonstrated the importance of collaboration and the resulting benefits.

The PFCC summed up by advising the Panel that the emergency services and public safety in Northamptonshire were in a strong position.

The Panel considered the report and gave consideration to:

- The training programme and how the training stayed relevant to every member of the community.
- The location of the Fire and Rescue Service college.
- The fire hydrants, whether 2 hydrant inspectors were sufficient with 15,000 hydrants to inspect, whether they had been inspected and what was the individual cost of inspection.
- The cost of new fire appliances.

- The Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, whether they had been installed and their effectiveness in comparison to the old cameras.
- What investment had taken place in relation to the emergency call system.
- The positive work being carried out and the importance of relaying the information to the public.
- Receipt of an award of £3 million to the county to crackdown on anti-social behaviour and Northamptonshire Police received approximately £1 million to assist deploy uniformed patrols in anti-social 'hotspot' areas to increase front line visibility and address anti-social concerns for the public and Councillors.
- The findings of HMIFRS PEEL report; that immediate work had to be done to improve crime investigation and the PFCC's response to and actions taken in response to the report.
- The PEEL report had stated that the incidents of domestic violence had decreased, but the Sunflower Centre had reported the greatest number of first incident referrals. Reassurance was requested from the PFCC that public money was correctly directed.
- Youth projects and the connectivity of the groups within the OPFCC and the Force.
- Performance report fire priority commentary and the implications of the prohibition notices which were elevated in quarter 3, the types of properties that were involve and the areas of risk.

The PFCC provided additional information in response to points raised by the Panel during the course of their discussion, as follows:

- The OPFCC had a positive action team, about recruitment they ensured that Northamptonshire Police were reflective of the society it served. And had carried out some positive outreach. In staying relevant, technology was increasingly important alongside, diversity and neurodiversity in recruitment.
- 60% of Police Officers had under 10 years of service although recently joined officers were more technologically literate.
- The main drive with the training programme was to drive up investigative standards, ensuring that the public receive a good service.
- A training suite had been equipped in Weston Favell to ensure that training could be carried out in appropriate settings. The PFCC offered the Panel an opportunity to visit and meet the team.
- The 42 metre platform basic cost was £1 million. Overall costs depended on the additional equipment included on the appliance.
- The national report had recommended a combined college of fire for leadership standards and there had been some debate whether that would include the Police training.
- A national issue had been identified with regards to fire hydrants, which led to questions whether there was a record of all hydrants on new build estates, whether they were fit for purpose, and when they had been inspected. It was recognised that two inspectors may not be sufficient and the situation regarding hydrants and their inspection was under consideration.
- A bank account holding £1.6 billion had been identified and contained a build-up, of small management charges applied for the administration of a road safety awareness course. £1.3 million was subsequently spent doubling the ANPR cameras covering all the major roads around the County examples of

success were provided, 2,000 cars taken off the roads, 900 arrests and a combination of ANPR intelligence and the new Police Officers had resulted in the largest seizure of drugs in Northamptonshire.

- The 101 and 999 services were linked, investment in the current year would build on the services. Other ways to report were being considered. Investment from the 2023/24 precept would enable reporting to be carried out through social media.
- Other investment need was revealed at the retail crime summit, identified perpetrators in the County would be passed through the Police National Computer (PNC) and Police National Database (PND) and would use retrospective facial recognition.
- Car crimes and uninsured vehicles were reducing because of the improved ability to track vehicles.
- The PFCC had received an Exceptions report from the Home Office advising that the murders in Northamptonshire were below the base line.
- Both Northamptonshire Police and NFRS had made improvements since 2015. Northamptonshire Police, had the largest budget set; the number of Police officers had increased by 200 since 2010; it had worked with the local authority on the Public Spaces Protection Order to address anti-social behaviour; submitted a £1m bid for Hot Spot patrols which would enable overtime for Police Officers and investment with street wardens employed by the local authorities, resulting in improved visibility in the communities; implemented a 2 year immediate justice plan and tripled the number of Police Officers.
- After the HMICFRS PEEL report was issued, a robust conversation had taken place at accountability board with the Police Force. The PFCC added that the Chief Constable was responsible for operational matters and his responsibility was to hold the Chief Constable to account. Investment had been made to enable the issues raised in the report to be addressed. The PFCC added that the PEEL Report had identified Northamptonshire Police as top in the Country for compliance with the Director General's case files. The quality of the case files handed to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) were closest in guide, with approximately 93% in the top 5 of the Country for guilty pleas at first hearing, a number the PFCC considered to be too low. He reassured the Panel that there were timings and processes in place and he would monitor the force to ensure they improved crime investigation.
- The PFCC expressed concern regarding victim attrition, the delays in the CJS and the consequential effects on the victims. The Police Force and HMICFRS recognised this area required improvement and training and development would be provided.
- The YVIU in Northamptonshire worked in conjunction with the early intervention teams of the OPFCC and with both North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council and with schools.
- HMICFRS were due to be inspecting the NFRS in the third week in March 2024, the report was expected by the summer of 2024. A Serving with Pride briefing had been provided to the Panel, the service had made good progress.
- The Sunflower Centre dealt with higher risk domestic violence cases. It was possible that the number of high-risk cases were increasing but the overall numbers were reducing. Northamptonshire Police had carried out a review of

the whole process to identify what could be improved to support victims. Good progress was being made. Repeat offences had reduced by one third. Through the perpetrator programme, Project PIPA, permission had been from the Director General to issue conditional cautions in domestic violence cases. Not all reported domestic violence cases were followed through to pressing charges by the victim.

- Investment had been made in enforcement to improve capability to ensure the safety of communities. Detailed information regarding the issuing of prohibition notices could be provided in a private briefing session with the Chief Constable.

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

- The cost of the fire appliances basic cost of £250,000, with the additional equipment £375,000 and the aerial appliance £450,000.

In response to a member's direct request, that the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer were to hold a briefing session in public, the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer reminded the panel of the operational perspectives; that the PFCC held the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to account, that it was not the role of the Panel. He indicated that the PFCC was keen for the Panel to receive briefings on operational matters, to see the joint working between the police and the OPFCC, but he cautioned against the panel members' expectation of attendance by the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer.

The PFCC provided an update regarding the Angiolini Inquiry and highlighted the following points:

- The Inquiry into the murder Sarah Everard had taken place.
- Everyone in Northamptonshire Police had been vetted and senior officers also had Developed Vetting clearance, carried out by the Cabinet Office.
- The report had highlighted missed opportunities, Professional Standards Department (PSD), conduct, character checks, VOICE.
- At the time of the tragedy the PFCC and the Chief Constable had made an investment in PSD and the PFCC reported that a further 8 full time Police Officers would be added to the team to ensure robust selection and recruitment process' were in place. All crime investigations would be investigated by specialist PSD officers, to ensure victim confidence, ensures crimes are dealt with in tandem and to provide better care.
- There would be an increase in the number of staff that investigate complaints to ensure the backlog for assessing and allocating crimes were dealt with.
- Conduct values and character checks would be carried out beyond the standard vetting for officers working in the high-risk areas indicated in the Casey review. The sharing of information between PSD and line managers would improve.
- Closer working with VOICE to support where there was police perpetrated domestic violence within the organisation. Every crime to be logged, and officers that were victims of domestic violence were to be provided with support.

- Key recommendation of the Angiolini report had identified the need for recruitment to new Vetting Manager roles.
- The PND DataWash for Northamptonshire had reported that no adverse risk information had been identified.
- A new external line for the public, anti-corruption reporting system had been launched.
- 17 members of officers and staff were on suspension. Should a criminal matter be resolved the suspension remained in place whilst the matter was dealt with.
- Review of indecent exposures, the Head of Crime and Justice had set up new process for all indecent exposures recorded in the last 12 months. Each crime would be reviewed by a senior officer.
- Investment had been made to address the issues identified and the senior leadership team in Northamptonshire recognised the seriousness of the work.
- Northamptonshire Police were one of eight forces to volunteer to receive the Angiolini team to provide an audit of the matters raised in the report.

In response to a members request the PFCC offered to send a summary of his update to the Democratic Services Assistant Manager for circulation to the Panel members.

A Panel member stated that the Angiolini inquiry had identified areas in our society which required change and drew Panel members' attention to a paragraph in the foreword of the report that was critical of the normalisation of unacceptable behaviour and language that was accepted seen as banter in policing culture. He referred to the reported comments by the PFCC in this context and asked how the staff in police and fire environments were to believe any sincerity in the findings with behaviours being identified at a senior level. The Panel member questioned the behaviour of the PFCC, and the effectiveness of the apology offered by the PFCC at the beginning of the meeting.

The OFPCC Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer advised the Panel of the action taken following the comments made by the PFCC. The PFCC had made a statement of contrition and explained the endeavours he had made to address matters with the individual concerned. The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer advised that on the 1 March 2024 the PFCC had made a self-referral to him - the PFCC had visited a fire station and had made inappropriate comments which he'd instantly regretted and were an error in judgement. The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer organised a meeting with the PFCC on the next working day. Prior to the meeting anonymous comments were received through the Speak Up System. A reflective conversation had taken place with the PFCC, and a statement made to the media. The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer had responded to the Speak Up System which informed the aggrieved parties and flagged the results of the conversation to the Assistant Chief Officer, the senior operational member of staff who was in attendance with the PFCC on the visit. The outcome of the conversation and the PFCC's apology for the language that he had used was relayed to the members of the watch that were in attendance during the visit. The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer acknowledged that it was a regrettable incident and he found reassurance that the procedures in place at the OFPCC worked and that staff were confident in the systems for reporting incidents.

A Panel member expressed his distaste of the language the PFCC had used, the poor judgement shown, and the extent of those affected by the comments. He emphasised the importance of respect and the correct use of terms and analogies in all aspects of life.

In response to a Panel member's question whether the discussion regarding the PFCC's conduct was for the Panel to comment on at this stage the Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that:

- All panels had a responsibility to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken by the PFCC.
- The Panel also had the function relating to complaints received about the conduct of the PFCC. The complaints process would be triggered by the receipt of a complaint; at the time of the meeting the Panel had not received a complaint in writing.

The PFCC requested to circulate a document providing an update of the estate's masterplan. The Chair advised that slides had not been provided to Democratic Services for inclusion with the Agenda papers and advised it would not be appropriate for it to be included in the meeting.

The PFCC explained that the tight timelines in which planning applications relating to the estate's strategy had to be made were the reason for bringing the update to the Panel. He considered it important that Panel members were made aware in advance of the work being carried and that planning applications would be submitted to the respective planning departments.

The Chair permitted that a brief verbal update be provided.

The PFCC informed the Panel that work had been ongoing on the estate strategy for both Northamptonshire Police and FRS and whilst it had encountered some challenges, they had developed a genuine long-term strategy for the future PFCC.

There were two particular key matters, the fleet and the disposal of the building at Earls Barton. There would be no financial loss on the building. A purpose-built fleet building would be constructed at Darby House, the cost of the build was anticipated to be cheaper than the costs of the original fleet building proposal. This provided the opportunity to build a new police and fire station on the Moulton site to replace the Moulton and Weston Favell sites. It was also planned to combine the Police and Fire control elements at Darby House and move the Kettering station to the new fire station at The Northern Accommodation Building.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel notes the Police, Fire and Crime Plan Delivery Update.
- b) The Panel requests that a visit to the Northamptonshire Police training team be organised for Panel members.
- c) The Panel requests that further information be circulated to Panel members about actions being taken by Northamptonshire Police to prevent and address misconduct that were outlined at the meeting.

235. **Fire and Rescue Authority Finance Update**

The Chair invited the Chief Finance, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to present the report. The report was taken as read and the Panel were invited to raise any points relating to the report and ask questions.

The Panel considered the report and requested further information regarding:

- The classification difference between Response Retained and Response Control.
- Whether the Fire and Rescue Authority budget would be sufficient to enable a response to a major emergency within Northamptonshire.
- The number of fire engines and whether the number would provide coverage across Northamptonshire.
- £487K underspend and whether that had affected the service provision.
- Whether there had been a resolution regarding S106 Agreement funding.
- How the staff vacancy underspends had been achieved.

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

- Response Retained related to on call fire fighters and Response Control related to response call handling personnel.
- The project setting process had contingencies in place, allocated for reactive incidents and there were reserves in place. These were adequate for the type of incidents that may occur in Northamptonshire. The OPFCC would approach the Government for support for if a more major incident occurred.
- There were 25 fire engines, whether the number was adequate to respond to a major incident was an operational matter for the Chief Fire Officer.
- The underspend had not affected service provision. The OPFCC had delivered against the original budget, with the original plans and the underspend allowed some money to be put back into the reserves to build in resilience for the future. The additional underspend was attributed to the business rates income. Without the increase in business rates income the Fire and Rescue Authority would be reporting an overspending.
- A meeting was to be held to discuss Section 106 monies. It was proposed that future reports to the Panel would clearly identify the draw down of S106 monies.
- Staff vacancies were mainly non-fire fighter roles, an assumption was made in relation to the level of turnover of staff, which had been higher than normal equating overall, to a saving.

The PFCC, provided additional information in response to points raised by the Panel during the course of their discussion as follows:

- A piece of work had been carried out using 5 years of data to analyse how much coverage by fire engines was needed in each area.
- Once, in 10 years, there had been a need to use 18 pumps.
- NFRS could call on mutual aid to increase its capacity to respond to significant incidents.

RESOLVED that: the Panel notes the Fire and Rescue Authority Finance Update.

236. **Policing Finance Update**

The Chair invited the Democratic Services Assistant Manager to read out the question from the member of the public, Craig Blacha for the PFCC.

“Mr Mold rightly stated previously that he scrutinises the Police Finance and the OPFCC to ensure the public have good value for money on their Council Tax. Last month while litter picking in Wellingborough I (Craig Blacha) came across a letter addressed to Northamptonshire Police from a utility company stating that Northamptonshire Police were overdue payment on a utility bill. Not only was this bill not paid on time there was a late fee attached to it. Why are we paying late fees if there was a robust process in place the taxpayer’s money would not be unnecessarily be wasted on extra charges. And finally, does the force need to pay £24,921 on a sports and social club officer from taxpayer’s money? The main responsibilities include ensuring lottery payments are received. Are these the real reasons our Council Tax precept is increasing? And would Mr Mold agree this is a waste of money that could be used to protect the public?”

In response to Mr Blacha’s questions, the Chief Finance Officer advised:

- The joint finance team that oversaw the finance of all services were directed to ensure all invoices were paid in a timely manner, avoiding late payment charges. The invoice in question had been disputed because the late fees were incorrectly applied, there had been no cost to the taxpayer.
- The sports and social club post was externally funded, there was no cost to the taxpayer.

The Chair invited the Chief Finance, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to present the report. The report was taken as read and the Panel were invited to raise any points relating to the report and ask questions.

The Panel considered the report and requested further information regarding:

- The underspends on the PFCC budget, in relation to PCSOs, domestic violence and sexual abuse.
- £399K being carried forward for the PCSOs recruitment. What was the neighbourhood policy plan and how would it be delivered?
- Frustration was expressed by a Panel member, that there had been limited access to the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer over a 2 year period. Restricting the Panel members’ opportunity to raise matters with them directly.

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

- The difficulty recruiting to the early intervention posts and a small underspend on integrated offender management were areas of underspend on the PFCC’s budget. Work continued to recruit to those new posts. The £3K, underspend in relation to domestic violence and sexual abuse represented a variation in staff wages and was not reflective of gaps in staffing. There was no impact on provision of services.

- The £399K being carried forward was earmarked for neighbourhood work and the recruitment to the PCSO posts. Part of the reserve related to Police Officers and ensuring officer numbers were maintained at a safe level.

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

- PCSOs had applied for Police Officer posts and had transferred, providing a challenge to maintain the PCSO staffing numbers. They were now up to cohort with PCSOs. Underspends would be allocated to neighbourhood projects. The OPFCC would provide the Panel with an updated neighbourhood blueprint imminently.

The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, provided additional information in response to points raised by the Panel during the course of their discussion as follows:

- The function of the Panel was to scrutinise the PFCC and the OPFCC had recently organised several briefing sessions to provide access to senior officers and operational leads and had provided access to operational expertise earlier in the meeting.

RESOLVED that: the Panel notes the Policing Finance Update.

237. **Police, Fire and Crime Panel Work Programme**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager introduced the report setting out the work programme, which was based on the standard agenda item but reflected that this was the last meeting of the year. The report therefore invited the Panel to highlight the items that it wanted the successor Panel to give consideration to including in the new work programme for 2024/25.

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

- A Panel member addressed the Chair regarding a concern about public conduct in meetings. Panel members had undertaken training and received guidance from both Democratic Services and the Monitoring Officer whilst undertaking their Panel duties. However, members of the public had questioned the personal integrity of Panel members and the Panel member was concerned regarding safety in meetings. The Chair advised that there was a broader concern within West Northamptonshire Council regarding the safety of elected members which was being given consideration outside of the meeting.
- A Panel member agreed regarding the safety concerns and outlined that it may be frustrating to some members of the public but the Panel was required to act within set powers and procedures.
- A Panel member expressed the importance of having legal representation at future meetings.
- It was noted that North Northamptonshire Council had two dates in the municipal calendar where the Executive meetings overlapped with Panel meetings, 13 June 2024 and 13 March 2025. The Panel discussed and agreed that those meetings would commence at the later time of 2pm.

- It was identified that assault on shopworkers was increasing and that it would be useful for the Panel to receive a briefing on retail crime and the response of the Police Force.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel agrees that its meetings on 13 June 2024 and 13 March 2025 should start at 2.00pm.
- b) The Panel identifies violence against retail workers as a potential topic for inclusion in the 2024/25 work programme.

238. **Complaints and Conduct Matters Update**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager presented the report advising that the report was for a shorter period, December 2023 to February 2024, to re-establish the normal cycle for presenting the reports.

At the time of writing the report, no new complaints or conduct matters had been recorded during the period in question and there were no outstanding matters.

A Panel member advised that he had received correspondence from a complainant indicating that there was an outstanding request to make a complaint about the PFCC and the Panel member requested that the Democratic Services Assistant Manager investigate the matter.

RESOLVED that: the Panel notes the Complaints and Conduct Matters Update.

239. **Urgent Business**

There was none.

The meeting closed at 4.55 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____