

# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

16 DECEMBER 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel's statutory responsibilities relating to review of the draft Police & Crime Plan and draft Fire & Rescue Plan produced by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire.
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## List of Appendices

None

### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. The report is intended to set out the statutory requirements on the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel to review the draft Police & Crime Plan and draft Fire & Rescue Plan produced by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire.

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The report summarises the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel's statutory responsibilities relating to reviewing and making a report on the draft Police & Crime Plan and draft Fire & Rescue Plan produced by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire. The Commissioner has produced these plans as a combined Police, Fire & Crime Plan, which appears on the agenda for the current Panel meeting as the next item of business. A summary of responses to public consultation on the Commissioner's draft Police, Fire & Crime Plan is also provided with it.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel reviews and makes a report on the draft Police & Crime Plan and draft Fire & Rescue Plan produced by the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire.
- 3.2 Reasons for Recommendation(s) – The recommendation is intended to enable the Panel to carry out its statutory responsibilities relating to scrutiny of the draft plans effectively at the current meeting.

### **4. Report Background**

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#### Police & Crime Plan

- 4.1 The Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011 (sections 5 and 7) states that a Police & Crime commissioner must issue a Police & Crime Plan setting out the following matters:
  - a) the Police & Crime commissioner's objectives for the policing of the police area; for crime and disorder reduction in that area; and for the discharge by the police force of its national or international functions
  - b) the policing of the police area which the chief officer of police is to provide
  - c) the financial and other resources which the commissioner is to provide to the chief officer of police for the chief officer to exercise their functions
  - d) the means by which the chief officer of police will report to the commissioner on the chief officer's provision of policing
  - e) the means by which the chief officer of police's performance in providing policing will be measured
  - f) services to be provided or commissioned by the commissioner to contribute to crime and disorder reduction in the police area and to support victims and witnesses of criminal offences and anti-social behaviour
  - g) any grants which the commissioner is to make in relation to crime and disorder reduction and support for victims and witnesses and the conditions applying to any such grants.
- 4.2 A Police & Crime commissioner must issue a Police & Crime Plan within the financial year in which an ordinary election is held, doing so as soon as practicable after taking office. A commissioner may also issue a new Police & Crime Plan or a variation of an existing Plan at any other time.
- 4.3 Before a Police & Crime commissioner issues a Police & Crime Plan, or a Plan variation, the commissioner must send a draft Plan to the relevant Police & Crime panel. The 2011 Act (section 28) requires the panel to review the draft Plan and to make a report or recommendations on it to the commissioner. The report or recommendations by the panel must also be published.
- 4.4 The Police & Crime commissioner must have regard to any report or recommendations made by the panel on a draft Plan, respond to the panel and publish that response. The commissioner may then issue the Plan.

## Fire & Rescue Plan

- 4.5 The Policing & Crime Act 2017 (schedule 1) and the Fire & Rescue National Framework for England state that a Police, Fire & Crime commissioner must issue a Fire & Rescue Plan setting out the commissioner's strategic vision, priorities and objectives for their Fire & Rescue service in connection with the discharge of the commissioner's functions as the Fire & Rescue authority. The National Framework sets the following priorities for all Fire & Rescue authorities:
- to make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents
  - to identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face
  - to collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide
  - to be accountable to communities for the service they provide
  - to develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.
- 4.6 The government expects a Police, Fire & Crime commissioner to issue a Fire & Rescue Plan 'shortly after' the commissioner takes office. A commissioner may also revise an existing Plan at any other time. A combined Fire & Rescue and Police & Crime Plan may be produced: in this case the combined Plan must set out both policing and Fire & Rescue priorities and objectives.
- 4.7 A draft Fire & Rescue Plan, or draft Plan variation, is subject to the same scrutiny process detailed in paragraphs 4.3-4.4 of this report.

## 5. Issues and Choices

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- 5.1 Reviewing and reporting on a draft Police & Crime Plan or a draft Fire & Rescue Plan is a mandatory task for the Panel. Local Government Association guidance for panels on policing and fire governance includes the following advice on good practice relating to scrutiny of a draft Police & Crime Plan:

*The panel might explore how the draft plan reflects assessments of local needs and could expect to be able to access, review and understand background information and evidence that has informed the plan in a timely way. The panel will also want to consider the commissioner's local police and crime objectives and the resourcing that will be put in place to deliver them.*

*The panel might also scrutinise the commissioner's consultation on the plan and the communication strategies to promote it, as well as the partnerships that the commissioner develops to ensure delivery of the plan. As the panel's work sits within a wider consultation process by the commissioner on the plan, it might want to test the views of the public against the perceptions of the commissioner. In this, members may draw on their experiences as local councillors, within the community or within the public sector.*

*Panels are also able to make recommendations for priorities in the plan, on performance measures to be used around delivery of the plan and for improvements in services to meet the*

*commissioner's objectives. Scrutiny of the police and crime plan should not therefore merely be a 'sign off' by the panel for publication, but instead an opportunity to scrutinise the commissioner and to discuss key issues and options. This approach, when also informed by in-year briefings and proactive work, will enable the panel to more effectively add value to consideration of the plan, rather than come late to a debate that has already concluded.*

- 5.2 Ultimately, the Panel should carry out its scrutiny role to reflect the statutory requirement that the functions of the Police & Crime panel for a police area must be exercised with a view to supporting the effective exercise of the functions of the Police & Crime commissioner.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposal.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposal.

### **6.3 Risk**

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

## **7. Background Papers**

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Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011

Policing & Crime Act 2017

Fire & Rescue National Framework for England

Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel Terms of Reference.

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