

# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

19 JULY 2022

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Northamptonshire Police, Fire &amp; Crime Panel Work Programme 2022/23 and operating arrangements</b>
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## List of Appendices

### **Appendix A – Outline Work Programme 2022/23**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. The report is intended to enable the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel to consider and agree its work programme for 2022/23 as well as to consider and agree the approach it will take on certain matters connected with the operation of the Panel.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1. The report invites the Panel to consider and agree its work programme for 2022/23, including any specific areas or priorities for scrutiny, reports to be requested from the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, and the timetable for identified activities. The work programme will support the Panel in carrying out its statutory responsibilities effectively through the year ahead.
- 2.2. In addition, the report invites the Panel to consider and agree whether to continue to participate in two network groups relevant to its role: the East Midlands Police & Crime Panels Network and the National Association of Police, Fire & Crime Panels.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel:
- a) Agrees the content of its work programme for 2022/23
  - b) Agrees to continue its membership of the East Midlands Police & Crime Panels Network for 2022/23.
  - c) Agrees to continue its membership of the National Association of Police, Fire & Crime Panels for 2022/23.
  - d) Notes the opportunity to respond to consultation proposals published by the government setting out reforms of Fire & Rescue services in England.
- 3.2 Reasons for Recommendation(s) – The recommendations are intended to support the effective operation of the Panel during 2022/23 and the delivery of its statutory responsibilities by establishing a work programme for the year; enabling the Panel to agree its membership of relevant information-sharing network groups; and advising the Panel of public consultation on government proposals relating to future Fire & Rescue service operation.

### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 The Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Policing & Crime Act 2017 and supporting legislation give various specific responsibilities to the Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel (“the Panel”). These are principally as follows:
- Scrutinising and reporting on the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC)’s proposed Police and Fire & Rescue precepts
  - Scrutinising and reporting on the PFCC’s Police & Crime Plan and Fire & Rescue Plan
  - Scrutinising and reporting on the PFCC’s Annual Report on the delivery of Police & Crime Plan objectives and on the annual Fire & Rescue Statement reporting compliance with the Fire & Rescue National Framework
  - Scrutinising and reporting on proposed appointments by the PFCC to certain positions (: Deputy PFCC; Chief Executive; Chief Finance Officer; Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police; and Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service)
  - Dealing with complaints from members of the public about the conduct of the PFCC.
- 4.2 In addition, the legislation referred to in paragraph 4.1 above gives the Panel the general responsibility to review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the PFCC in connection with the discharge of his functions and to make reports or recommendations to the PFCC with respect to these matters. The Panel is required to carry out its role with a view to supporting the PFCC in effectively exercising his functions.
- 4.3 It has previously been standard practice for the Panel to set an annual work programme to provide a framework within which it carries out its functions and the practical tasks these involve. The work programme is made up of a combination of statutory and discretionary scrutiny work; matters relating to the operation of the Panel; and any supporting activities such as briefings or training. The work programme covers a rolling 12-month period. The work programme is considered at the first Panel meeting in the municipal year. It can then be kept under regular

review by the Panel and modified or updated as necessary, with a view to ensuring that it is focussed on the aim of using available capacity to best effect.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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### Work Programme 2022/23

- 5.1 An outline work programme for the Panel for 2022/23 is included with this report (at Appendix A). This incorporates statutory business outlined in paragraph 4.1 above; regular monitoring reports that the previous Panel chose to receive to support its more general scrutiny role; and items of business relating to the operation of the Panel. The document also lists some other potential items of business and supporting activity that the Panel may wish to consider.
- 5.2 It is emphasised that this outline work programme is being presented to the Panel as a starting point for discussion that will produce the final version. The work programme for 2022/23 should be set by the current Panel. The work programme can be informed by input from a range of sources, including suggestions from the previous Panel, from individual Panel members and from the PFCC. The Panel should consider suggested topics from all sources on their merits, with a view to setting a work programme that reflects the Panel's remit, has the support of Panel members, is realistically deliverable within available resources and that has the potential to produce the most worthwhile outcomes.

### Participation in the East Midlands Police & Crime Panels Network

- 5.3 The Panel has previously participated in the East Midlands Police & Crime Panels Network that has operated since 2014. The Network is intended to be an information and support network for the five panels in the region: Derbyshire; Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland; Lincolnshire; Northamptonshire; and Nottinghamshire. It is administered by Frontline Consulting Associates (FCA), which provides advice, consultancy and learning and development activity in the public sector. The Network holds two information-sharing meetings per year, which can be attended by 2-3 representatives from each panel. Network members also get access to sources of information and guidance on good practice and a 10% discount on the cost of any training activity purchased from FCA. The Panel is invited to consider whether to continue its membership of the Network for 2022/23. The cost of this is £420.

### Participation in the National Association of Police, Fire & Crime Panels

- 5.4 The National Association was established in April 2018 as a special interest group of the Local Government Association. The National Association aims to represent and promote the views and interests of Police, Fire & Crime panels in England and Wales. Its specific purposes include providing a forum for discussion of issues affecting panels; sharing ideas and experience; promoting good practice; supporting liaison and dialogue with other relevant agencies; facilitating common responses by panels to relevant consultations; horizon scanning; and promoting better public understanding of the role of panels. The National Association is led by an elected Chair and Executive Committee and administered by Democratic Services at Essex County Council. The National Association operates on a non-subscription model and there is no

cost for membership. The Panel has been a member of the National Association since January 2020. The Panel is invited to consider whether to continue its membership for 2022/23.

## Fire & Rescue service reform – government consultation

- 5.5 The Home Office is currently carrying out public consultation on proposals to “introduce system-wide reform that will strengthen Fire & Rescue services in England” set out in the fire reform white paper published on 18 May 2022. The proposals are divided into the three thematic areas of building professionalism, boosting performance and strengthening governance. The governance theme includes the proposal to transfer fire governance to a single elected individual, overseeing delivery by an operationally independent chief fire officer, as a standard organisational model.
- 5.6 The public consultation document and related information is available at: [Reforming our fire and rescue service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service). Panel members are invited to consider the consultation document outside of the current meeting and to feed back to the Panel Secretariat any points that they wish to make in response, which could be incorporated into a response submitted by the Chair of the Panel.

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

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 It is intended that the resource implications associated with the proposed decisions set out in this report will be accommodated within grant funding that the Panel’s host authority is able to claim from the Home Office for the purpose of maintaining a panel for the Northamptonshire Police area. The specific cost of membership of the East Midlands Police & Crime Panels Network can also be met from this grant funding.

### **6.2 Legal**

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

### **6.3 Risk**

- 6.3.1 The principal risk associated with the recommended decisions is that the Panel agrees a work programme that is not sufficiently effective. This situation could be caused by a range of factors: for example, if the work programme did not reflect the Panel’s statutory functions; if the work programme was unfocussed or included too much business to be realistically deliverable; or if the work programme was fixed at the start of the year and did not allow the flexibility to respond to issues that might subsequently arise. These risks should be mitigated by the Panel taking a considered view of the work programme at the start of the year, informed – but not bound – by the work of its predecessor. The Panel should then review the work programme at each of its subsequent meetings through the municipal year and amend it as may be considered necessary. Throughout, the Panel should ensure that the work programme and the specific activities

contained within it remain deliverable within the Panel's overall capacity and the resources available to support it.

## **7. Background Papers**

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Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011

Policing & Crime Act 2017

Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel Rules of Procedure