

Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel
Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2020
Venue: Room 15, County Hall, George Row
Northampton
(Meeting held in public)

PRESENT:-

Councillor Gill Mercer	East Northamptonshire Council (Chair)
Councillor Richard Auger	Daventry District Council
Councillor Judy Caine	Corby Borough Council
Councillor Janice Duffy	Northampton Borough Council (substituting for Councillor Eales)
Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage	Northamptonshire County Council [from Item 06/20]
Councillor Martin Griffiths	Borough Council of Wellingborough
Councillor Ian Jelley	Kettering Borough Council
Mr Robert Mehaffy	Independent Co-opted Member
Mrs Anita Shields	Independent Co-opted Member
Councillor Winston Strachan	Northamptonshire County Council

Also in attendance for all or part of the meeting

Stephen Mold	Northamptonshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC)
Paul Bullen	Director for Delivery & Monitoring Officer, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (OPFCC)
Deborah Denton	Communications Manager, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
James Edmunds	Democratic Services Assistant Manager, Northamptonshire County Council
Paul Fell	Director for Delivery, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
Paul Hanson	Democratic Services Manager, Northamptonshire County Council
Helen King	Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
Nicci Marzec	Director for Early Intervention, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
Stuart McCartney	Head of Office, Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner
Sophia Nartey	Deputy Monitoring Officer, Northamptonshire County Council
Rob Porter	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Corporate Services, Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service
Kerry Purnell	Assistant Director, Corporate & Community Service, Northamptonshire County Council

There was 1 member of the public and press in attendance.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm

01/20 Apologies for non-attendance

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Eales (Northampton Borough Council) and Pritchard (South Northamptonshire Council). Apologies for non-attendance were also received from the General Counsel & Monitoring Officer, Northamptonshire County Council.

02/20 Notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting

None received.

03/20 Declaration of Members' Interests

None declared.

04/20 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting and made the following points:

- The current meeting had a full agenda and all involved were encouraged to make their contributions as focussed as possible.
- The Chair had attended the national conference for Police, Fire & Crime Panels on 15th November 2019. Delegates had been informed about the Police Foundation strategic review of policing and the relevant call for evidence had been circulated to Panel members. The Chair had also led a breakout session on the transfer of Fire & Rescue governance, which had illustrated the different situations that had developed in the various areas where this had occurred.

05/20 Minutes of the Police, Fire & Crime Panel meeting held on 10th October 2019

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the Police, Fire & Crime Panel meeting held on 10th October 2019 be agreed.

Matters arising from the minutes:

Minute 33/19 Force Performance Improvement Plan

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that the Northamptonshire Police Plan on a Page had been emailed to Panel members earlier that day.

Minute 43/19 Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Delivery Update

The Chair advised that she had written to each of the county's MPs regarding fairer funding for policing in Northamptonshire, who had raised this matter with the government. The Minister for policing had replied referring to the announcement of funding for 57 additional officers in the county. The policing funding formula would be considered in the context of a spending review and the new government's budget plans.

The Chair further highlighted that additional contextual information on Force performance was included in the Delivery Update presented to the current meeting.

Minute 44/19 Northamptonshire Police Recruitment, Retention and Sickness

The Chair noted that the Panel was still to receive value for money comparative data on police forces produced by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The Chief Finance Officer advised that related data was currently with the Force to finalise and could be provided to the Panel once this had been completed.

06/20 Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's Delivery Update

The PFCC presented the report (copies of which had previously been circulated) setting out recent activity towards the delivery of his Police & Crime Plan priorities, highlighting the following points:

- He thanked the Panel for its support in pursuing fairer funding for Northamptonshire. He would continue to make this case. He was pleased that the Minister for policing had said that it would be considered as part of a spending review but this needed to be done.
- The report included additional information on Force performance as requested by the Panel. Significant work was being done to support performance improvement as well as continuing business as usual activity and he commended these efforts.
- The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Corporate Services was in attendance to give a more detailed update to the Panel on Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) performance relating to appliance availability and response times.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Corporate Services commented on NFRS performance, highlighting the following points:

- The latest Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) specified that NFRS would have a minimum of 14 appliances available on the run. NFRS was now starting to deliver this.
- NFRS had learnt from inspection by HMICFRS, which had been its first experience of this process. It had made progress in addressing the two causes of concern identified by HMICFRS. It was due to be visited again in March 2020.
- One of the causes of concern related to NFRS's ability to respond to incidents with regard to achieving minimum appliance availability and the effectiveness of oversight arrangements. NFRS had acted on this by revising its senior management structure, improving scrutiny arrangements and changing its shift system for community risk group watch managers. This had contributed to a positive trend in appliance availability from April – November 2019, with 20 appliances available during the day time on an average daily basis including those using flexi-crewing. Availability was higher during night time as this was the highest period of risk.
- Flexi-crewing referred to a number of on-call duty sections within the retained service that could operate with 3 personnel on an appliance. They were deployed to low level, non-complex incidents such as a bin fire. NFRS had not previously been clear that it could include flexi-crews within its appliance availability numbers but HMICFRS had advised that other services did so.
- Improved availability was, in turn, boosting standards of response. The IRMP set an average minimum response time to all incidents in the county of 10 minutes. NFRS had been at 11 minutes 15 seconds when governance had been transferred to the PFCC. Performance had been improving since, particularly in rural areas.

[Councillor Gonzalez De Savage entered the meeting during the preceding discussion].

The Panel considered the information provided about NFRS performance. Members raised the following points during the course of discussion:

- It was questioned whether response times to a major incident were affected by the use of flexi-crewing if it was necessary to decide which resource to deploy, particularly in parts of the county covered by the retained service.
- NFRS should use a better example of a small scale incident than a bin fire, given the previous fatal incident in Wellingborough.
- NFRS was thanked for its efforts to improve public safety in Northamptonshire.
- Confirmation was sought about the availability of individual appliances on the run.
- The NFRS capital programme needed to reflect development and changes in the county.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Corporate Services provided additional information in response to points raised during discussion as follows:

- NFRS sought to have 5-6 personnel on retained appliances as far as possible. Flexi-crewing enabled an appliance to operate with 3, whereas previously a minimum of 4 personnel on a retained appliance was required for it to be available. Flexi-crewing boosted flexibility. It also supported retention within the retained service as it increased the opportunity for on-call firefighters to carry out their role. Various other services used this approach.
- The nearest resource would always be deployed to an incident. However, a flexi-crew would not be expected to deal with higher risk incidents, although they might be part of the overall response together with another appliance.
- NFRS had around 30-32 appliances, made up of around 28 that were on the run and training and back-up vehicles. This was a tight position, although he was not aware of any station that was off the run due to issues with appliance availability. NFRS sought to maximise the use of existing appliances and was also investing through the new capital programme. Appliance breakdowns were rare: there was likely to be some correlation with the age of vehicles, but there were no significant trends.
- NFRS benchmarked its performance against that of a comparator group of services and against national performance. NFRS's performance was generally mid-range, although it was one of the cheapest services in the country.
- NFRS continued to operate initial intervention vehicles. It had previously operated rapid response vehicles crewed by an NFRS officer and a police officer but had now changed this approach.
- All services had mutual aid arrangements to assist in responding to major incidents.

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

- Appliance availability was now better than at the point when HMICFRS had identified this as a cause of concern, even without taking into account flexi-crewing.
- He commended the NFRS leadership team and all of its officers who had worked to deliver the recent performance improvements. They were the result of hard work as additional officers and new appliances were coming but were not yet on-stream.
- NFRS had also recently faced additional demands from an increasing number of road traffic collisions (RTCs) in the county.
- NFRS's improved performance contrasted with other services, which were in a static position. NFRS had delivered improvements whilst being in the bottom 10% for funding in the country.
- NFRS needed capital investment of around £22m just for vehicles and equipment, without taking into account other areas such as estates.
- Northamptonshire residents were being kept safer as a result of NFRS's improved performance. However, it now needed to continue to make progress.

The Chair welcomed the improvements achieved so far by NFRS. She then invited members to raise any points on the policing aspect of the report that they wished the Panel to consider. Members raised the following points:

- Concern was raised about the relatively low resolution rate reported for some crime types such as sexual offences and rape. Reassurance was sought that changes in the Force's organisational model and greater investigative capacity would help to improve performance in this regard.
- Concern was raised about increases in knife crime in Northamptonshire. This needed to be addressed. More information breaking down the 627 knife crime offences in the last 12 months mentioned in the report could be useful to Panel members.
- It was questioned why no information was included in the report on the Force's performance on sexual offences against children in comparison with its peers.
- The reduction in gun crime over the last 12 months was positive, although this should not lead to complacency.
- Police officers were praised for their readiness to deal with individuals carrying a knife, whilst only equipped with a baton. It was questioned whether it would assist in this for the Force to make more use of Taser.
- The PFCC was asked to give his views on overall progress towards the delivery of his key priorities for policing and community safety, given that he was entering the last few months of his term in office.
- Reassurance was sought that the new Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategy 2019-22 would assist in improving outcomes in this area.
- It was questioned whether any consideration was being given to reintroducing static speed cameras in the county to assist in addressing the increasing number of RTCs resulting in people being killed or seriously injured.

The PFCC provided additional information in response to points raised by members during discussion as follows:

- The outcomes for sexual offences and rape in Northamptonshire set out in the report were consistent with the national picture. They reflected issues in the wider criminal justice system that could increase the time required to achieve a resolution. This in turn could increase the chance of cases being withdrawn.
- Knife crime could not be addressed solely by policing. Prevention and early intervention were essential. Young people needed to be kept engaged rather than put at greater risk through situations such as permanent exclusion from school. A range of activity reflecting these aims was being carried out in the county. He was confident that the Force was moving in the right direction regarding enforcement although progress needed to be sustained.
- Home Office funding for the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence multi-agency gang intervention programme in Northamptonshire would continue to March 2021. Its effectiveness would then be assessed. This approach needed to become the mainstream.
- He was satisfied with the reported position on modern slavery and human trafficking offences, which demonstrated why this was the subject of action in Northamptonshire.
- He was prepared to provide the Panel with additional background data on Force performance but emphasised that the Panel's was to scrutinise the PFCC not the Force.
- All officers equipped with Taser had to be appropriately vetting and trained. The Force had been proactive about using Taser. It would be assisted in this if the function of vetting individual officers could be done on a national basis.

- He considered that the Force had made genuine progress during his term in office, particularly under its current senior leadership team. However, the Force was not yet where it should be. He wanted to ensure that improvements were sustained. The public perception of community safety in Northamptonshire also needed to be improved.
- It was positive that issues such as domestic violence and modern slavery were now being discussed openly. A range of actions were carried out in Northamptonshire to address domestic violence. The issue was not taken lightly and would always be a high priority in his Police & Crime Plan. He would also look to continue valuable projects run by groups like the Good Loaf and Sunflower Centre. There needed to be an effective joined up approach involving all relevant partners. The creation of unitary authorities in Northamptonshire should assist in this, for example, by bringing together safeguarding and housing functions.
- The reported position on people killed or seriously injured in RTCs in the county was not satisfactory, although it should be seen in the context of the total number of vehicles on the roads. The Force deployed around 100 automatic number plate recognition vehicles every day and analysed data to identify any potential patterns. It was also currently doing a specific piece of work on this area with partners.
- He thought that average speed cameras could be more effective than reintroducing static speed cameras. Training courses for young drivers were an example of other activity that also supported road safety.

The Director for Delivery advised that road safety activity in the county was currently focussed on specific groups: working drivers, young drivers and mature drivers. It was also the case that if static speed cameras were to be reintroduced then new equipment and new sites would be required.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The Panel requests to be provided with the following additional background information:**
 - **A breakdown by the age of the perpetrator of the 627 offences recorded by Northamptonshire Police in the last 12 months where a knife was used during the offence.**
 - **Clarification of why no information was included in the report on Northamptonshire Police's performance on sexual offences against children in comparison with its peers.**
- b) **The Panel welcomes performance improvements achieved by Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service since its last inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.**
- c) **The Panel notes the report.**

07/20 Changes to the structure of the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner and development of enabling services in Northamptonshire

The PFCC presented the report (copies of which had previously been circulated), which was intended to update the Panel on the two interlinked areas of the structure of the OPFCC and the development of enabling services. The PFCC highlighted the following points:

- Good progress had been made with the development of enabling services supporting the Force and NFRS. Recruitment of a head of service post would commence shortly.

- In light of this he had determined to formalise the trial arrangement of rotating the OPFCC head of paid service and monitoring officer between two directors begun in December 2018. This arrangement had made the OPFCC more effective and had enabled £150,000 to be used for frontline services.
- The enabling services approach offered real opportunities to improve cost-effectiveness in the long term by bringing together functions such as fleet maintenance, estates and finance.
- There was a £130m budget for policing in 2019/20, which included approximately £20m for enabling functions. Improving the way in which these functions were delivered would contribute to achieving the Force's and NFRS's outcomes and to enabling the senior leadership teams to focus on their primary functions.

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

- There would be a single post between the Force and NFRS to head enabling services.
- The proposed approach did not produce a saving on the existing budget but allow resources to be used more effectively.
- Martin Scoble, the former OPFCC Chief Executive, had recently left the OPFCC to take up a new opportunity. The PFCC was sorry to lose him and wished him well.

Panel members expressed support for the direction set out in the report, which reflected the need for different organisations to work together effectively to use overall resources in the best interests of Northamptonshire. The benefit of a joint approach on estates was particularly highlighted: the PFCC advised that this was an area of current work by the OPFCC.

RESOLVED that: the Panel endorses the direction set out in the report regarding the development of the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner and of enabling services in Northamptonshire.

08/20 Implementation of Policing & Crime Act 2017 requirements relating to the police complaints system

The PFCC presented the report (copies of which had previously been circulated), which provided an update on the approach being adopted to implement the PFCC's new responsibilities relating to police complaints due to come into effect from February 2020. The PFCC highlighted the following points:

- The OPFCC had done a considerable amount of work to support the introduction of the new responsibilities under the Policing & Crime Act 2017.
- Guidance on the new requirements continued to be issued. The Independent Office for Police Conduct had recently produced guidance on the options for recommendations that its staff could consider. The PFCC circulated this to the Panel.
- A complaints team of 3 staff members was in place and ready to begin operating from 1st February 2020. This would reduce demands on the Force. However, a five-fold increase in the number of complaints was expected. This took into account the fact that the 2017 Act changed the definition of a complaint to an expression of dissatisfaction with a police force.
- The new requirements created the potential for an increase in the number of complaints about the PFCC.

- The new requirements were a positive step in general as they would enhance openness, the opportunity for the Force to learn from complaints and public confidence in the complaints process.

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

- There were additional costs resulting from the additional requirements of the 2017 Act.
- The approach being taken to implementing the new responsibilities in Northamptonshire was based on the aim of dealing effectively with complaints, comments and compliments. The Force was an organisation that had the power to imprison people and should be subject to an appropriate level of oversight. He wanted members of the public to have confidence in the arrangements introduced and for these to support an environment of continuous service improvement.
- The implementation of the new requirements would include a clear message to the public about the new definition of a complaint.

The Director for Delivery also provided additional information as follows:

- The Force's Professional Standards Department (PSD) would still investigate cases of potential misconduct by officers. The PFCC's new responsibilities concerned lower level cases of dissatisfaction with the Force, which were defined in the 2017 Act. The new arrangements would assist in providing a better response to these as well as informing the PFCC in holding to account the Chief Constable.
- The 2017 Act did not require a random comment about the Force on social media to be treated as a complaint. However, specific comments about a particular incident could represent a complaint. The person making the posts would be contacted in such a case.
- The 2017 Act did not require a complaint to be made in writing. Most complaints were currently received in this form. When the OPFCC received a verbal complaint it subsequently sent an email summarising the matter to the complainant. It would also work with a complainant who found it difficult to communicate in writing. These approaches would continue under the new arrangements.
- The OPFCC would aim to contact all complainants within 2 working days of a complaint being received. It had not set a standard timescale for resolving all complaints due to the varying nature of complaints that might be received. However, the OPFCC would ensure that complainants were kept informed as the process progressed.
- The OPFCC would produce public information about how the new arrangements would operate once the start date for them was confirmed.
- The new arrangements would involve the OPFCC using the same database as the PSD, which would enable new complaints to be cross-referenced with any relevant previous matters that may exist.
- The PFCC was not taking on the function of keeping complainants informed about the progress of a complaint as the Force would be in a more informed position to do this. If the OPFCC sought to carry out this function it would just end up needing to refer to the Force for information.
- The new definition of a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction with the Force would be clearer for the public than the current situation in which a complaint had to be presented in terms of misconduct by an individual.

The Chair highlighted that the Panel would need to be aware of the implications of the new requirements as implementation progressed, including whether they increased the number of complaints about the PFCC coming to the Panel. Members emphasised the importance of giving the public clear information about who would be responsible for dealing with complaints about the Force under the new arrangements and about the definition of a complaint. At the same time it was hoped that the new requirements did not create excessive demands on the bodies involved.

RESOLVED that: the Panel notes the report.

09/20 Policing Budget Update

The PFCC presented the report (copies of which had previously been circulated) setting out the latest forecast outturn position for the OPFCC and Force budgets, highlighting the following points:

- The overall budget for policing of £137.314m was forecast to balance. This included a forecast overspend of £218,000 on the Force budget, although this was reduced from £712,000 forecast in August 2019.
- There was a forecast underspend of £615,000 on the OPFCC budget. Some of this underspend arose from the timing of commitments linked to recruitment of youth service posts.

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

- On the basis of the current police funding formula Northamptonshire should receive funding for 191 extra police officers as part of the national uplift of 20,000 officers announced by the government. This equated to 57 extra officers in the period to 2020/21. The government had not yet confirmed funding allocations beyond 31st March 2020. This created a situation in which the PFCC could be required to make budget decisions without full information on relevant parameters.
- Planning around the extra police officers announced by the government also needed to take into account that they were full time equivalent numbers, meaning that more individual officers could be involved in practice.
- The target of having 1,367 police officers in Northamptonshire by 1st March 2021 would be achieved. The PFCC now only released supporting funding to the Force when recruitment targets were met.
- The planned increase in the number of police officers in Northamptonshire would give the Force more officers than in 2010, when it had just over 1,300. This would be the highest number of officers for some time. Few other forces would be in a position to say that they were ahead of their position in 2010.
- Feedback from new intakes to the Force indicated that different factors were contributing to a lower number of officers joining the police pension scheme. Older recruits such as those who had previously served in the armed forces could already be members of a pension scheme. Others were choosing not to join immediately as the Force was in the process of reviewing its salaries relative to neighbouring forces. This situation reflected changes to the idea that people joining the police did so as a career for life.
- The capital programme for policing included approximately £30m investment in Information & Communications Technology (ICT). It was an area where improvements were being sought and the enabling services approach would contribute to this.

- Part of addressing issues with Multi-Force Shared Services (MFSS) would be to consider how functions delivered for the Force by MFSS and by LGSS could be brought together to provide the most effective long term solution.
- The Force had done positive work regarding the use of drones and resources had been invested in training supporting this. However, there were challenges connected with the national funding model for police air services.

The Chief Finance Officer also provided additional information as follows:

- Funding for 19 officers in 2019/20 was confirmed. The proposed base budget for 2020/21 would include provision for the remainder of the 57 police officers.
- The provision of information on the policing finance settlement was very late this year. It was usually issued in mid-December. It was hoped that it would be announced very soon as the provisional local government finance settlement had now been announced.
- A lot of work had been done on ICT but this remained an area that could cause concern. The PFCC was pursuing this in budget discussions with the Chief Constable.

Panel members welcomed action to bring together ICT services across the Force and NFRS and to make good use of mobile devices to support community safety.

RESOLVED that: the Panel notes the report.

10/20 Fire & Rescue Budget Update

The PFCC presented the report (copies of which had previously been circulated), highlighting the following points:

- The current forecast outturn on the Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire & Rescue Authority (NCFRA) budget was an underspend of £428,000. This took into account the transfer of £100,000 to reserves to support the recruitment of additional firefighters.
- The forecast outturn reflected local business rates and Section 31 grant funding above the levels included in the original business case and an underspend on training, offset by additional property costs.
- The estimated capital budget requirement for NCFRA was £22m, made up of £15m for vehicles and £7m for equipment. This indicated the significance of the situation that needed to be managed. The OPFCC and NFRS were working to mitigate the risk of appliances going unserviceable.

The Chief Finance Officer advised that the current reported position reflected timing factors relating to training and capital purchasing. The recruitment of additional firefighters would result in training costs in 2020/21. NFRS had recently invested in hose reels and ladders and the impact of this would appear in the next Budget Update.

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

- It was questioned why the budget position did not show more of a benefit from income generation. It was understood that NFRS provided training for other services from the Chelveston Training Centre, training on the Cobra system and also received an associated financial return from Cobra sales.

- It was currently forecast that £33,000 of £71,000 commercial income in the budget would be achieved. It was questioned what degree of confidence there was that this figure would be improved by year-end.
- The projected investment income of £20,000 for 2020/21 was positive. Further information was sought about how this would be generated.

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

- There was a backlog of fire hydrant repairs in Northamptonshire that would show an impact in future Budget Updates.
- The reported position for the training budget group was net of any income generated by NFRS. Further information on this could be provided to the Panel if sought.
- It would be a challenge to increase commercial income above the current forecast although the aim was to do so as far as possible. Assumptions in this area had been revised for the proposed 2020/21 budget.
- NCFRA contracted LGSS to carry out its treasury management function. Work had been done on how NCFRA could use its money to generate a return: £20,000 was considered to represent a prudent forecast of what could be achieved in 2020/21.

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

- NCFRA would consider opportunities to develop income generation. However, he had set the priority of maximising NFRS's appliance availability. The commercial income group represented a small percentage of the overall budget. The safety of Northamptonshire residents was the first priority.
- The Cobra system was not at the leading edge of technology to the same extent as it had been in the past, which affected income from this source.
- Opportunities to use the Chelveston Training Centre for police training were being considered.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The Panel requests to be provided with confirmation of the current income generated by Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service from the provision of training.**
- b) **The Panel notes the report.**

11/20 Early views about the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's proposed precepts for 2020/21

The PFCC commented on the current position regarding the development of his proposed precepts for policing and Fire & Rescue, making the following points:

- The OPFCC was dealing with a challenging situation in relation to the policing precept, whereas there was more certainty about the parameters for the Fire & Rescue precept.
- There was a reasonable level of confidence in the policing base budget but uncertainty about the funding uplift and how additional government resources to increase police officer numbers would be allocated between forces.
- Public consultation on the PFCC's proposals was at an early stage.

- Different commissioners were dealing with the current situation in different ways. The PFCC had taken a conservative approach, preferring to have to deal with a financial settlement that proved more positive than anticipated rather than the opposite.

The Chief Finance Officer made the following points:

- She thanked district and borough council chief finance officers for the information they had provided to the OPFCC about their respective Council Tax bases, which had come in on-estimate this year.
- The provisional finance settlement for Fire & Rescue had been issued by the government and was out to consultation until 17th January 2020. There was a tight timescale for developing the proposed precept.
- The OPFCC was working on a range of scenarios in relation to the policing precept.

The Chair invited members to raise any points relating to development of the proposed precepts that they wished the Panel to consider.

RESOLVED that: the Panel notes the latest position regarding the development of the Commissioner's proposed precepts for 2020/21.

12/20 Policing & Fire Governance – Guidance for Police & Crime Panels

The Chair introduced the report (copies of which had previously been circulated), highlighting the following points:

- She had been involved in the work to develop the guidance.
- She proposed that it could be a productive approach for the Panel to set up a task-and-finish working group to consider the guidance and any potential opportunities to develop and improve the way that the Panel operated.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that the Panel had used a working group for similar tasks in the past, for example, to consider how it could best carry out the expanded role of a Police, Fire & Crime Panel. However, it would also be helpful for the Panel to identify as far as possible that there would be a worthwhile task for a working group before proceeding.

The Panel considered potential approaches to dealing with the guidance. Members highlighted that local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire would also have implications for the future organisation and operation of the Panel. This would need to be considered by the appropriate authorities: the current Panel could provide input that would help to inform future decisions.

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager highlighted that the Panel could consider taking a phased approach to reviewing its current and future operation.

RESOLVED that:

a) The Panel agrees to establish a working group to carry out the following tasks:

- **To review the current operation of the Panel in light of the Local Government Association guidance on Policing & Fire Governance and identify any opportunities for improvement.**

- **To consider potential changes to the operation of the Panel that will be required to reflect local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire, with a view to helping to inform future decisions on this matter by the responsible bodies.**

b) Panel members be contacted following the current meeting in order to identify and confirm the membership of the working group on Panel operation.

13/20 Police, Fire & Crime Panel Work Programme 2019/20

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager presented the report (copies of which had previously been circulated) setting out progress with its current work programme. The Panel was also asked to confirm its future participation in the National Association of Police, Fire & Crime Panels (NAPFCP) following the NAPFCP's decision that it would operate on a non-subscription basis. The Democratic Services Assistant Manager went on to highlight that focus for the Panel meeting on 4th February 2020 would be on scrutinising the PFCC's proposed precepts and the Panel may wish to consider the amount of discretionary business that should be included on the agenda.

The Panel considered the report. Members supported limiting the main business of the Panel meeting on 4th February 2020 to scrutinising the proposed precepts. Members also suggested that it could be helpful to start the Panel meeting earlier, or to hold separate morning and afternoon sessions on the different precepts. The Democratic Services Assistant Manager advised that if the business for the meeting was limited to scrutinising the proposed precepts it should be possible to do this effectively within the normal meeting arrangements.

The PFCC advised that he would like to present information on his proposed capital programme to the next Panel meeting. The Chair accepted that this would relate to the PFCC's budgets and proposed precepts.

The Chair proposed that the Panel should incorporate the topic of ICT in policing in its future work programme. The Panel was also invited to confirm its previous in-principle decision to participate in the NAPFCP.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Panel agrees that its meeting on 4th February 2020 should start at 12.30pm.**
- b) The Panel agrees that the agenda for its meeting on 4th February 2020 should be limited to the following items of business:**
 - **Scrutiny of the Commissioner's proposed Police precept and budget for 2020/21.**
 - **Scrutiny of the Commissioner's proposed Fire & Rescue precept and budget for 2020/21.**
 - **Standard matters relating to the administration of the Panel.**
- c) The Panel agrees to include a briefing on Information & Communication Technology in policing in its future work programme.**
- d) The Panel agrees to continue its participation in the National Association of Police, Fire & Crime Panels.**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 4.30pm.

Next scheduled Panel meeting: 4th February 2020 at 12.30pm.

James Edmunds – Democratic Services Assistant Manager

This information can be made available in other formats upon request.
Please contact James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager
on tel. 01604 366053 or e-mail: jedmunds@northamptonshire.gov.uk