



Northamptonshire Police,
Fire and Crime Commissioner

Annual Report

2020-2021

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Introduction



This year has been one like no other with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented challenges this has placed on both the Police Force and the Fire and Rescue Service.

As the PFCC I have been incredibly proud of how we have collectively risen to this challenge and ensured that our communities have been protected and supported.

The pandemic has also impacted on every aspect of our work as we have all had to adapt to new ways of working to ensure the day to day working of my office can continue smoothly to continue to hold the Police Force and Fire and Rescue Service to account whilst ensuring all of our statutory roles and responsibilities are delivered. This has been a real challenge for my team and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and dedication over the last twelve months.

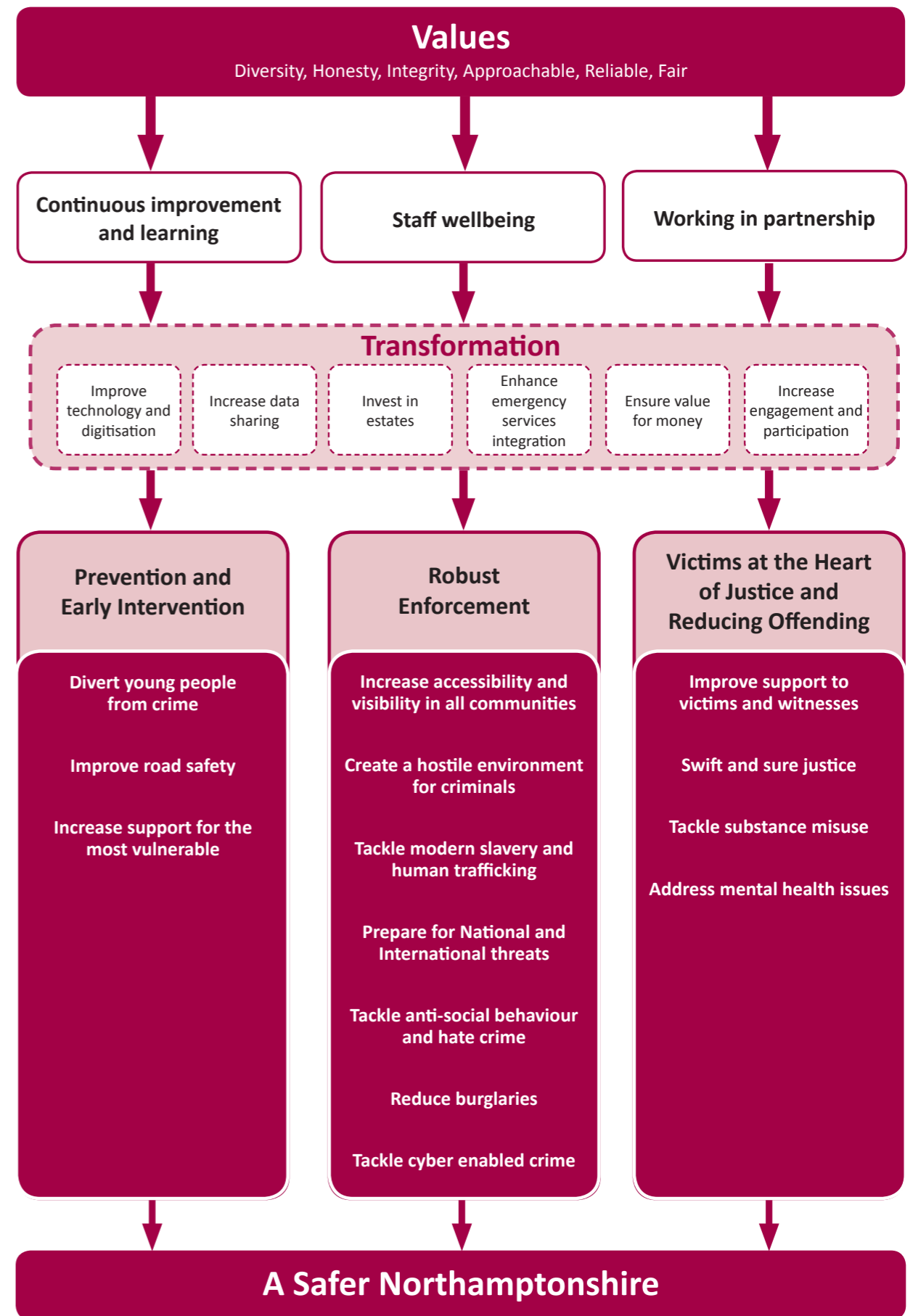
This annual report highlights that despite the pandemic, a great deal of work has been delivered towards both the Police and Crime Plan and the Fire and Rescue Plan. I have invested in new technology and equipment that will help the force ensure Northamptonshire becomes a hostile environment for criminals to operate in. This will be supported by my investment to increase the number of frontline officers which will also see a new focus on local policing which will more than double the number of neighbourhood police officers.

My commitment to investing in early intervention has continued, helping to protect and support some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Not only does this work help to prevent people from entering the criminal justice system, it also provides victims with the opportunity to choose a different path in life, which can enable them to make their own choices in life, free from any coercive control or violence.

This year has shown that by working closely together, the Police Force and Fire and Rescue Service and my office are greater than the sum of its parts. We have brought teams closer together, invested in new technology and reimagined how we deliver our services; all of which is bringing real benefits to the frontline. Our work is being recognised by both the Government and HMICFRS as being innovative and groundbreaking which we can all be very proud of. Despite the pandemic, a great deal of work has been delivered and this report sets out how we have continued to work towards delivering a safer Northamptonshire.

Stephen Mold
Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime
Commissioner

Plan on a Page



Prevention and Early Intervention

Early Intervention

The ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) team launched in February 2019 to identify families in difficulty at an early stage and to step-in and offer support. To date the team have supported 830 families across Northamptonshire, which means a total of 1,541 children and young people have benefited from family and individual support as well as advice and guidance on a range of issues such as domestic abuse, healthy relationships, parenting, on line safety, mental health of parent or young person, substance misuse, parenting issues and school exclusions. The ACE team fill a gap in early intervention and prevention that is not currently provided by partners.

Almost half of all referrals to the team (40%) are a result of a Police Public Protection Notices (PPN). During the numerous lockdown periods, the team have received reduced referrals from schools, however referrals for support did increase when schools reopened. The ACE team worked throughout the pandemic, supporting families by phone, video conferencing and when permitted, meeting with a young person in school, or in an agreed safe outdoor area.

Since January 2021, the ACE team have initiated a family feedback project which aims to provide qualitative feedback about the service and most importantly gives a voice to how the families

view their current situation and if they feel they are in a better place. This feedback also helps identify any further support required.

To date 62% of the 39 families who have been contacted have provided feedback of which 96% were happy with the support they received and 83% confirmed that their family were in a better place. Other notable highlights from the project were that 67% of families have seen an improvement in school attendance and 75% have had no further police call outs since direct support from the ACE team. This project is ongoing and to continue receiving additional information, the team have now included obtaining the families' permission to be contacted three months after completion of ACE support.

In January 2021, two domestic abuse (DA) ACE support officers were established to help people who have received a police officer call out for an incident assessed as "standard" low level domestic/family conflict. During this time, 272 incidents were assessed as suitable and allocated to be supported by the DA ACE team (includes supporting 458 children), of which 60% of cases were offered advice and assessed as not needing further support. 20% were referred to specialist services for further support.

The team have also referred some families to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) after gathering further information and assessing the presenting risks. The advice, guidance, support and referral to specialist domestic abuse agencies educates and empowers adults and children to consider making changes to their personal circumstances and gives the practical expertise to do this. Additional support with finances, housing, legal issues and safeguarding is also offered and these support elements decrease the opportunity for further domestic incidents and increases the likelihood the police will not be called.

This project has been put together in response to the growing number of Police callouts for domestic/family conflict related incidents unlikely to result in prosecution. The Early Intervention Domestic Abuse ACE Practitioners contact every family who have had the police respond to a standard-graded domestic incident within 48 hours. The practitioners have extensive knowledge and experience of supporting victims, perpetrators, children and young people who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse and work in the same way as the rest of the ACE team, uncovering the underlying reason for the incident.

Longer term, it is our ambition to deliver the following:

- An outcome for all PPNs completed for a domestic incident ("An outcome" refers to contact being made for all domestic non crime incidents assessed as standard)
- Increase the Force's professional curiosity and knowledge of trauma informed practice
- Better identification and classification of domestic incidents
- Improve consistency of domestic abuse referrals across the county.

My office now has the skills and experience to provide a much-needed service that will meet the needs of couples and families who, without some support are highly likely to come into contact with Northamptonshire Police and ultimately may enter the criminal justice system. By getting upstream we are able reduce the demand on front line policing and hopefully provide beneficial outcomes for those who need our help or support.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Youth Service

The Targeted Youth Service was established in January 2020. The team have developed positive networks with the Force and within our communities which include wider agencies such as local authorities and the voluntary sector. We work with agencies to ensure provision is in place for young people with an appropriate, relevant, and meaningful youth offer incorporating places to go, things to do and someone to talk to.

Youth workers support vulnerable children and young people across Northamptonshire identified as being at risk of exploitation from adults and at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

During the last 12 months the team have had 2647 contacts with children and young people through 352 individual detached/street based youthwork sessions in Kettering, Northampton, Wellingborough, Daventry and Corby. These sessions are designed to address the underlying causes of offending, steering children and young people away from criminality in the community. The Youth Service offers bespoke groupwork packages which typically consist of 6/12

sessions with young people on issues identified by referrers or by children and young people themselves.

The team deployed throughout the pandemic, supporting vulnerable children and young people to understand Covid guidance and have provided access to have face to face Youth Worker support (safely distanced). School based groupwork and 1:1 work was paused in late winter because of Covid restrictions; however, the Team were able to resume support programmes in four schools in the county delivering to 22 young people and were able to continue Covid compliant 1:1 sessions within the community with 35 young people.

The team returned to 1:1, groupwork interventions and targeted support in communities they had already engaged with to complete the work they had started. The team have added new key areas across the county, Rushden, Northampton and Irthlingborough offering action-based research with a view to deploying detached sessions and developing school and community based targeted sessions.

In 2020/21 the team delivered an informal educative session to 141 young people highlighting their vulnerabilities to exploitation from gangs, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. During the final quarter of the year, the team supported 92 individuals, using groupwork and 1:1 interventions. 23% of these were for support with emotional wellbeing and 20% for gang awareness.

The team use a nationally recognised assessment to measure progress and reduction in the likelihood of further difficulties. The end of Q4 20/21 saw 38 young people who had a starting point and 11 individuals reaching their midway progress point. Early indications show Youth Team interventions are making a positive impact to those individuals, with 64% (7 of 11) registering an improvement in their confidence and self-esteem and 55% feeling safer.

Youth Commission

The purpose of the Youth Commission is to enable the voice of young people to be heard by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The Youth Commission was integrated into the Youth team this year with 26 new members and the development of 7 peer mentors. The sheer number of applications resulted in the Commission being expanded to 15 schools-based Youth Commission Champions, with the aim of helping reach their school communities on the topics chosen by this year's intake - water safety and healthy relationships.

As young ambassadors, they develop their self-confidence and as they see their work is making a difference in the community, their self-esteem and aspirations are raised. They develop skills in listening, and mutual respect, and see how by working collectively, they can bring about greater change.

Robust Enforcement

£1.5m For Crime Fighting Projects in Northamptonshire

At the beginning of 2020, the Home Office launched the Safer Streets Fund which provided funding for Police and Crime Commissioners to bid for. The fund was set up to support initiatives to tackle crime in areas particularly affected by acquisitive crime such as burglary, vehicle crime and robbery. The funding was for measures that are proven to cut crime, including changes to the street scene such as the installation of CCTV, locked alley gates and better street lighting. The Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner was successful in its three bids and was awarded almost £1.5m by the Home Office to fund crime fighting projects in Wellingborough, Kettering and Northampton.

The successful bids were:

- Almost £546k to implement a range of security improvements on the Victoria and Isebrook wards in Wellingborough. This included the installation of security gates on a number of alleyways behind homes. Alley gating is proven to reduce burglary by more than 40%, as well as reducing fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. The project also included providing crime prevention surveys and free crime prevention measures to residents in the wider area. Working in partnership with other organisations, notably The Borough Council of Wellingborough, we were able to fit 74 gates to secure local homes as well as ensuring a significant uplift in CCTV in the town, in terms of both numbers and quality of

cameras. We also ensured over 2500 homes received direct crime and fire prevention advice, materials and security devices.

- The sum of £280k to support the extension of CCTV in Kettering as well as the proposal to install a small number of secure alley gates and the provision of home security literature and devices to several hundred homes.
- The sum of £650k to fund projects to create safer parking and other environmental improvements – including improved lighting, along with a door replacement programme at vulnerable locations to enhance safety and security in the Portland Place, Bouverie estate and surrounding areas of Northampton

The three areas were identified as they had higher than average levels of acquisitive crime in the County and where we were able to implement effective remedies in the short timescales allowed by the fund. Work to deliver all three projects has been successfully delivered and is already making a real difference to the lives of local residents as we continue to create a hostile environment for criminals across communities in Northamptonshire.

My office has already submitted bids for Safer Streets Fund, round 2, which will be announced by early Summer. If successful, this funding will allow similar much needed work to take place in other areas of the County this year.

Hi tech investment will deny criminals the use of the roads

During the year, I set aside a £1.3 million injection of funding to add 100 new cameras to the ANPR network across Northamptonshire as part of our investment strategy to disrupt crime, support road safety and deny criminals the use of the county's roads. This investment has delivered new, fixed and mobile cameras across the county and marks a significant expansion of the ANPR network. The cameras are being used by Northamptonshire Police to fight crime and keep people safe, providing additional tools to detect crime, disrupt criminals who are using the roads and deter them from committing crime in this county.

The investment has also delivered:

- additional cameras on the county's major, strategic routes and at the county borders
- an increased ANPR footprint in rural communities, with cameras at strategic routes on roads in rural areas
- increased coverage in the county's major towns

The plan also included increased mobile ANPR capacity in police vehicles as well as rapid deployment cameras that can be sent to hotspots around the county.

The expanded camera network is part of a wider strategy to strengthen crime fighting and links several initiatives, including the establishment last year of the road crime team to focus on denying criminals the use of the roads and the new rapid response Interceptor cars. Taken together, these initiatives significantly strengthen the tools available to help Northamptonshire Police fight crime and keep the county safe. The cameras will also support police in tackling antisocial driving and identify uninsured vehicles, as research shows that drivers who drive uninsured are more likely to be involved in serious road traffic collisions and be involved in other types of criminality.

Robust Enforcement

Investments drive crime fighting boost in Northamptonshire

More than £1.5 million has been invested to give a crime fighting boost in Northamptonshire with rural policing, neighbourhood policing, knife crime and high-tech investigation all receiving extra funding to increase capacity and strengthen the police response to tackle crime and keep people safe in Northamptonshire. Taken together these projects are part of an ongoing push by my office and Northamptonshire Police to improve policing across the county and marks one of the most significant investments in the Force of recent years.

The funding is made up of £750k from local investment through the council tax precept and £400k from special grant fund from the Home Office, topped up to £1.5 million from existing resources and savings. It will support initiatives including:

- More officers and specialist vehicles in Rural Policing teams to increase engagement

with and operational capacity in rural communities. This includes mobile police stations to increase the visible police presence in rural areas

- Deploying 20 extra officers to neighbourhood policing teams across the county, working in communities to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour and crime in our town centres
- Committing an additional £100k to support the Force in tackling knife crime
- Continuing support for the dog section with five new handlers and new vehicles
- Improving the way data is retrieved from phones and other devices by creating a digital hub to speed up and improve the quality of investigations
- Investing £80k to fund programmes that will prevent sexual violence

Modern Slavery and Exploitation Film

A short film called 'Take a Closer Look' was commissioned by my office to raise awareness of modern slavery and exploitation. The nine-minute film depicts a scenario following a road traffic collision which highlights signs of modern slavery that aren't immediately obvious. It invites viewers to 'take a closer look' whereby signs of exploitation become apparent.

The film's release was timed to coincide with the launch of a new campaign to raise awareness of forced labour in the logistics sector, in partnership with independent charity Crimestoppers. The key messages the film contains have never been more pertinent. National bodies have warned there is a serious risk coronavirus could lead to a rise in modern slavery and human trafficking. The main drivers – poverty, lack of opportunity and other vulnerabilities – have intensified and increased the risk of exploitation and abuse.

The film is aimed at frontline professionals who are likely to have the opportunity to spot the signs of slavery in their areas of work and make referrals, ensuring victims are safeguarded and intelligence is provided so offenders can be brought to justice. It has also been distributed to a wide range of partners across the County to raise awareness among their staff and the wider public as modern slavery is often hidden in plain sight and people may well have witnessed it without realising.

We know this is a heinous crime where victims are often controlled by force, threats, coercion, abduction, fraud and deception. We are committed to doing all we can to help raise awareness across our communities and among frontline workers so we can protect the vulnerable and put a stop to the exploitation.

The film can be viewed at:
<https://youtu.be/FMKwCcppWZM>

Robust Enforcement

Neighbourhood Watch

The first Neighbourhood Watch scheme under Operation Target, funded by my office, was launched in the Pineham Lock area of Northampton.

Crime prevention literature and window stickers were delivered to residents and street signs were erected to deter criminals from operating in the area. Members are registered on the NHW database so that regular dialogue can begin within the community. Residents are also being encouraged to join Neighbourhood Alert to keep up to date with relevant information from the police about what is happening in their area.

The Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch

Association was awarded £9,500 for Operation Target, which aims to reduce crime and build stronger and safer communities in crime hot spot areas by establishing Neighbourhood Watch schemes. We have also been working with Neighbourhood Watch to reinvigorate non active schemes and create new schemes in the three Safer Streets locations. This will provide an opportunity for greater community cohesion and contact in areas disproportionately affected by crime and aid the flow of engagement and community intelligence in these locations.

We have also worked with Neighbourhood Watch to increase the footprint of schemes in the three Safer Streets areas that I referred to earlier in this report.

Local Policing

A major new focus on local policing in Northamptonshire will more than double the number of neighbourhood police constables.

Police officers in neighbourhood teams across rural and urban communities will be doubled, growing from 50 to 100 over the next 18 months, with an aim to add a further 60 in coming years. These will be additional officers to add to the neighbourhood police and PCSOs already working across the county.

Neighbourhood policing will now be at the heart of our fight against crime, with visible, locally accountable policing to tackle the problems that matter to people. This new focus has been made possible by the increased number of police officers in the Force. In addition to the national investment, I have prioritised local investment in police officers over the past four years and

Northamptonshire Police is on target to have over 1500 police officers by March 2023, as compared with 1170 four years ago. This means that we can now strengthen our neighbourhood teams without taking resources from emergency response or other specialist areas of crime fighting.

Local residents place a great deal of value on knowing that they have a local, neighbourhood policing team dedicated to tackling problems in their area. As our plans develop, we will make sure that every neighbourhood has a dedicated, named local team dealing with the issues that matter to them at the earliest opportunity. In addition to this, we are also investing in two mobile police stations which will help to provide more visible and accessible local policing in the more remote and rural communities across Northamptonshire.

Making Northamptonshire Safer Fund

Northamptonshire organisations continue to receive a funding boost thanks to my 'Making Northamptonshire Safer Fund' which provides grants of between £3,000 and £10,000 for initiatives that support the aims of the Police and Crime Plan. Details of the grants awarded can be found on my website at:

<https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/making-northamptonshire-safer-fund-grants-awarded-2020-21/>

Road Safety Community Fund

Supported by the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance, grants of between £500 and £5,000 will be considered for initiatives that support the Northamptonshire Strategic Road Safety Plan which addresses road safety issues in local areas.

For example, we have worked with parish councils from across the county who were successful in their bids to the Road Safety fund and will use the money to install speed control devices in areas of concern. Details of the grants awarded can be found on my website at:

<https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/public-funding/grants/road-safety-community-fund>

Supporting Communities Fund

The Northamptonshire Fire and Rescues Service's Supporting Communities Fund provides grants between £250 and £1000 to Fire Fighters and staff to carry out initiatives that support the aims of the Fire and Rescue Plan.

Supporting Communities Fund 20-21	Scheme	Amount Granted
Op Bells	Bells for Bags	£401.00
Christmas Operation	Purse Bells and Chains	£783.00
Bobby Bears additional funds	Knitted bears to provide to children in DA situations	£84.04
Priority Area Crime Prevention	Alarms and padlocks for issue to victims of crime	£1,000.00
Victim Essentials	Clothing and toiletries packs for victims	£1,000.00
Community Cycling Event	To purchase safety products for gift bags	£524.00
Op Baric Signs for What 3 Words	Lorry thefts	£1,097.00
Op Cougar	Car thefts in Corby	£1,000.00

All of these projects are working in different ways to make their communities a safer place to live. The hard work and creativity that people put in to help make our communities safer and during these very difficult times is inspiring and is helping people who may be at risk from criminality and exploitation.

Victims at the Heart of Justice

Victims

During 2020 -2021 organisations working with victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence were able to apply for funding made available by the Ministry of Justice, through my office to support them through the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Over £409k was awarded (in two rounds) to support and extend domestic and sexual abuse services in Northamptonshire, with the condition that the funding should have been spent by March 2021.

Six organisations were successful in their bid for a share of the funding to tackle short-term disruption to their services due to the pandemic, help support essential costs of their current activities, such as moving to remote working, and to meet increased demand for their services due to Covid-19. Funding was made available from the Ministry of Justice, within separate pots, to organisations who are already commissioned by the PFCC, and to organisations that are not currently commissioned by the

PFCC. This was done with the aim of widening the availability of the funding to reach a greater number of victims.

A summary of the six organisations that were funded and the activity they will provide is below:

- Voice for Victims and Witnesses were awarded over £91k towards:
 - ✧ The purchase of equipment so that emotional and practical support can be provided online, and to increase the ways in which victims can access support,
 - ✧ to undertake a campaign raising awareness on child on parent violence and signposting to relevant support (will work together with the Rise bid below)

- ✧ To provide additional training to staff in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence with nationally accredited programmes, and
- ✧ to undertake an educational and support programme aimed at the risks facing children and young people online in respect of sexual offences

- RISE CIC were awarded almost £65k for activity which focussed on working with victims of Domestic Abuse where children are violent in the family home. This will involve working with both parents and children and young people through a programme and 1:1 work.
- Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Alliance were awarded over £73k towards increasing capacity to provide outreach support for children who have experienced Domestic Abuse, this included programme provision and targeted 1:1 work across the county.

- Eve were awarded over £75k - to increase capacity to support adult victims of Domestic Abuse and their children/young people, which involved programmes and 1:1 activity.
- Northamptonshire Rape Crisis were awarded £33k – to increase Independent Sexual Violence Advisor capacity so that more victims were able to receive support, together with additional PPE equipment where face to face contact was necessary.
- ASSIST Trauma Care were awarded over £71k - to provide therapeutic support for victims of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence through delivery of a step by step programme and individual support sessions.

Victims at the Heart of Justice

Local Criminal Justice Board

Since March 2020, the Local Criminal Justice Board which I established and chair, continues to draw key criminal justice agencies together to draw up a coordinated response to the COVID pandemic which has had a significant impact on the operation of the local criminal justice system.

In particular, I have both supported and challenged Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) to work differently to reduce the backlog of court cases which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Unfortunately, the proposed Nightingale Court proved prohibitively expensive and HMCTS are looking to increase court sitting hours as their preferred method of reducing the Crown Court backlog.

I continue to ensure that politicians nationally are focused on the impact of the backlog as we work to ensure that delays in the court process do not cause victims and witnesses to lose confidence in the justice system.

Reducing Reoffending Board

As chair of the Northants Reducing Reoffending Board, I have agreed several priorities aimed at reducing reoffending.

My office is coordinating the local refresh of the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme.

I am funding an IOM project manager who is working to a multi-agency project board (made up of Police, Probation and local authority representatives).

Next year I have earmarked funding for services to support the coordinated multi agency management of cases within the refreshed scheme. Cases managed by the scheme will include the most prolific local offenders, many of whom cause significant harm to our communities.

Project NOVA

We are continuing to work with Project NOVA which is a project delivered in a partnership between RFEA (Forces employment charity) and Walking with The Wounded (WWTW). The concept of Project Nova is to provide holistic support to veterans who come into police custody, with the aim of reducing offending. The Project NOVA Coordinator for Northamptonshire will work in direct partnership with NHS Liaison and Diversion Teams who sit within Police Custody, with Police staff and officers within custody suites and the community.

The Coordinator will provide advice, guidance and support to veterans by using a Project Nova network of military charities and local and national organisations that can assist veterans, depending on their individual needs. The role will be peripatetic in nature and their core focus is diversion at point of arrest, in order to prevent repeat offending and/or a prison sentence.

A range of support is offered including assistance with obtaining employment, education and housing needs as well as helping access for support with substance misuse and mental health concerns.

Project NOVA is already running in 18 other Force areas and they have shown some very positive results.

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the last twelve months, we have all lived through an unprecedented event and a great deal of work was undertaken to ensure that the county was able emerge from lockdown in a safe and sensible way which does not put at risk all the gains we have all collectively made during this difficult period.

It is easy to use words like unprecedented, unique or unparalleled to describe the situation we have all lived through over the last year, but it has also demonstrated how our county's emergency services are able to respond to a difficult and changeable situation.

I am proud of the work our emergency services have undertaken and the positive and pragmatic approach of our officers and staff during the pandemic and the lockdown. We also received a letter from HMICFRS, praising the work of the Force and the Fire Service and the benefits that working more closely together can bring to the frontline.

The financial support we have received has been vital in our response to the pandemic. Colleagues from my office, the force and fire and rescue service have worked incredibly hard to ensure we had the resources available to support the frontline over the last twelve months, and I would like to thank them for their work and dedication.

NFRS's strategic priorities during the Pandemic were:

- To maintain the 999 emergency response service
- Adapt Prevention and Protection activities to support the most vulnerable
- Assist in the multi-agency response to the pandemic
- Ensure the Safety and wellbeing of staff

Over the last year NFRS have maintained a normal response capability, with an average of 20 appliances available on a day to day basis and maintained their standards of response of a first appliance at an average of 10 minutes.

During the Pandemic NFRS's Prevention and Protection teams continued to support the most vulnerable by delivering safe and well checks to those who most needed them while the Protection team focused on ensuring that high risk premises such as care homes and building that were adapted for the homeless were safe.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue (NFRS) have played a full part in the multi-agency response being at both the Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG), the Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG) the Strategic Co-ordination centre and also relevant sub groups such as the Community Resilience Cell, and Excess Deaths Cell as well as more recently the Vaccination Cell. Most of this has been co-ordinated via the Joint Operations Team.

In the first wave of the pandemic NFRS were undertaking:

- Urgent Care Ambulance driving for East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)
- Mortuary support, moving the deceased from Hospital mortuaries to the temporary mortuary at Wollaston
- Pharmacy deliveries to those who were shielding to ensure that the most vulnerable received their medication
- A range of logistical support to assist with PPE and food deliveries

During the second wave, from the beginning of December, NFRS stepped up again supporting other agencies by:

- Ambulance driving for EMAS, with staff trained to undertake this activity working shifts as required by EMAS
- Mortuary support, with staff trained and doing two or three days per week moving the deceased to temporary mortuaries
- Clearing snow from the vaccination centres during poor weather to ensure they remained operable

- Assisting with COVID surge testing in Corby
- Twenty volunteers await training to become vaccinators, the plan being for our staff to potentially step in later in the year should volunteers need to return to the own employment

By the 31 March 2021, in addition to lost sales fees and charges, council tax and business rate support grants, NCFRA had received the sum of £841k in COVID grants from the Home Office. Of this amount, £128k was provided towards the cost of providing services with and for other agencies. The sum of £243k has been carried forward to support additional costs in future years, with the balance of £598k spent on:

- Staffing, either backfilling those who are off work or funding those who are doing work supporting other agencies
- PPE
- Hygiene and cleaning materials
- ICT equipment to facilitate home working and remote meetings

Northamptonshire Police - Operation Talla

Operation Talla is Northamptonshire Police's response to the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic.

During the early stages of the pandemic, the Force defined and prioritised which functions were critical to maintain to ensure the core role of policing continued to be met.

The Force defined its critical functions as being able to maintain the ability to deal with:

- Major, Critical and Emergency Incidents
- Serious Crime
- Firearms Incidents
- Protecting Vulnerable People
- Serious Public Order
- Fatal and Serious Road Traffic Collisions
- Ensure the health, safety & well-being of staff through the provision of effective training, equipment, support and governance to deal with operational challenges.

- To provide custody facilities and associated justice department functions
- To deal effectively with all matters which impact upon community cohesion, or the legitimacy of the Force
- To maintain a cadre of Police Staff with specialist knowledge e.g. Firearms and Critical Incident Commanders

In many ways, Northamptonshire Police were both innovative and leaders in the model of approach to Covid-19. The Force was one of the first in the country to identify an elevated risk to visible ethnic minority officers and staff. The risk assessment and associated mitigation was identified as national best practice. The Force was also the first to design and utilise a Joint Enforcement Team for Covid, working closely with partners in joint patrols well ahead of the government introduction of marshals, and culminating in a multi-agency enforcement and compliance team.

The Force Control Room (FCR) ensured that many staff were able to take non-emergency calls from home. Those who were identified as having to 'shield' or were otherwise vulnerable, to continue to provide vital services to the public. Northamptonshire Police also made use of Single Online Home, the national online reporting portal for police forces across the UK. A process for ensuring that incidents reported online were treated with the same expediency as calls was devised, ensuring all reports were turned into incidents. A dedicated team of staff not only monitored the reports but were responsible for re-contacting those who reported personally. This received hugely positive feedback from the public; to date over 14,000 reports have been personally responded to.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the finances of all public sector organisations and Northamptonshire Police have been similarly impacted. Additional costs have been incurred

in areas such as:

- PPE equipment;
- Arrangements to safeguard staff and buildings;
- Support for agile working, virtual meetings and different ways of working
- Additional funding to support COVID enforcement

Excluding additional support for council tax, as at 31 March 2021, funding of £1.204m has been received and total costs incurred of £1.613m. The Chief Constable and I have sought all available funding opportunities to mitigate the impact of any costs on the policing budget and have also ring fenced the sum of £733k within reserves to support any future costs. In addition to this, in policing, the majority of recently procured PPE equipment was provided directly by the Department of Health.

Transformation and Estates

Transformation

My commitment to ensuring my office operates in an open and transparent manner has again been recognised by CoPaCC who have awarded us with their Open and Transparent Quality Mark. Over the years the process, criteria and rigour of this assessment have been refined and strengthened, to support OPCCs to improve standards of transparency. CoPaCC now considers how easy it is for a member of the public to find the information disclosure. This means it's not sufficient to just make the information available, it should be easy to identify where the information can be found and simple to navigate. They expect to see clear, non-technical language and simple navigation to ensure true public transparency. Northamptonshire was one of just 18 OPCCs in England and Wales that scored very well and were highly commended for their work on this important area of work.

Delivering the Estates Strategy

A great deal of work has been undertaken to radically overhaul and improve both Fire and Police buildings in line with the joint Estates Strategy. This year marked the opening of our new landmark joint building Darby House which is a state of the art two-storey office building in Wellingborough. Once it is fully operational, it will accommodate over 500 police and fire staff and serve as the Fire & Rescue Service HQ. This will help to free up outdated and inefficient police and fire buildings for disposal and allow us to build an estate that will support the effective delivery of emergency services for generations to come.

In addition to this, a new base will be created in Weston Favell for the neighbourhood police team so that they are even closer to the community they serve, as part of a renewed focus on neighbourhood policing in Northamptonshire. The current Weston Favell police station will then be sold.

This development also supports the Force's new focus on neighbourhood policing, which will see a growth in the number of neighbourhood officers who will be based in communities and more visible and accessible to the areas they serve. Weston Favell is currently the town's main response base. It is in a poor state of repair and no longer meets the needs of policing in the area.

The building at Weston Favell is 40 years old and needs significant repairs – work that would cost more than the building is worth. Even if these repairs were carried out, the building does not meet the current operational needs of the Force or the community. The longer term plan to move out of the current Weston Favell station supports the broader strategy of streamlining the number of buildings in the police and fire estate: sharing buildings rather than owning two nearby sites, disposing of those that are expensive to run and providing visible, accessible, practical bases in communities. This will manage costs and allow funds to be focussed on the delivery of frontline services. Over the coming months and years, there are plans to develop the fire stations at Daventry and Towcester into shared police and fire buildings and to dispose of the nearby police stations.

Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service will share buildings wherever possible. The two services already share some support teams and the move to joint buildings will encourage even closer working and strengthen support to the front line.

A new, joint garage workshop has been purchased in Earls Barton which will be the base for a joint police and fire fleet team and will open the way for further streamlining: The old Fire Service headquarters at Moulton can now be sold and the small retained fire station in Earls Barton can eventually be disposed of, with a new fire station being incorporated into the new workshop site, subject to any future planning permission.

Significant investments have been made in Northamptonshire Police and the Fire and Rescue Service over the last four years. We have more police officers than ever before and have been able to expand neighbourhood policing teams. Our police and fire buildings need to put neighbourhood officers in the heart of the community and to be shared, so that they cost taxpayers the least amount possible.

New bespoke police training centre opens in Weston Favell

Giffard House, the new Northamptonshire Police training centre in Northampton, was officially opened by the Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

Giffard House was purchased last year and the interior of the building has since undergone a complete refurbishment. It has now been transformed into a modern and professional, bespoke police training facility that will enable the Force to deliver a range of training to new recruits and existing officers and staff alike. The new facility is an important investment for policing in the county and will add much needed capacity that will support the Force's drive to recruit hundreds more police officers. It replaces two small modular buildings in the driveway at Wootton Hall that were earmarked for replacement more than 10 years ago.

Northamptonshire Police is seeking to attract and recruit another 200 police officers over the next few years and those new recruits need to be trained to the highest standards. The investment in a new training hub was vital to create a professional learning environment that I believe now is one of the best in the region. Giffard House is an important addition to the Force estate and will ensure we are able to continue to provide effective, professional and quality training in a much improved and dedicated learning environment for many years to come.

Improving Technology and Digitisation

Cyber Alarm

The cyber security monitoring tool was developed with a local Northamptonshire company and piloted using businesses in Northamptonshire with funding from my office. Due to the success of the project, the Police Cyber Alarm has had new features added and is now being rolled out nationally. Cyber Alarm is a free monitoring tool, which includes vulnerability scanning and helps businesses to protect themselves against cyber threats. The data collected from the tool also helps policing to identify trends and emerging threats in cyber crime. The data collected can also be used to assist in investigations.

Cyber crime can be at best disruptive and at worst truly devastating for businesses and organisations. Policing online crime is one of the biggest challenges that policing faces today and it continues to increase. That's why I will continue to champion the development of systems like Cyber Alarm, which provide a tool to help an organisation take steps to protect itself, as well as gathering intelligence that can be used to help organisations take steps to protect themselves. I'm proud that the system has proved its value and will now be used to help protect more widely around the country.

Northamptonshire Cyber Security Forum

The Commissioner holds a Cyber Security Forum every month to provide an opportunity for IT directors, managers and specialists from any business or public sector organisation in Northamptonshire to come together with police to discuss and understand cyber security threats. Due to the pandemic this Forum was then taken online through MS Teams. There have been numerous presentations from Forum attendees for subjects such as account compromise, safer online shopping, threat landscape and enterprise IT monitoring.

The Forum is well attended by various organisations not only in Northamptonshire but also from organisations within the East Midlands. The Forum also provides an informal support network for businesses and organisations to discuss their experiences and garner technical advice and guidance from cyber experts. This Forum has a collaboration with Digital Northampton and has supported the Merged Futures event, now in its third year. Merged Futures is an opportunity to showcase the digital innovation across Northamptonshire and spread the cyber security message across local businesses.

Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS)

The new Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) has streamlined digital evidence collection and sharing and was fully rolled out to the Force, following a very successful pilot, in March 2020. This system provides better tooling for our investigators by drawing on integrations from numerous source systems to put digital evidence all in one place. It enables investigators to locate, view and manage digital material within one single system. In addition, it allows sharing of digital material with other agencies, such as the CPS, and the public can upload and share their images with us, such as photographs and CCTV. The system is already proving to have many benefits in time-saving and efficiency, audio and video files can be redacted in situ using an intuitive interface and other Forces can now share critical digital information electronically.

Microsoft 365

The Force are now well underway with the National Enabling Programme (NEP), which is providing the IT foundation for a digitally enabled and collaborative Police Force nationally. This includes a new productivity suite (Microsoft 365), identity management and a national monitoring capability. A significant portion of the workforce has been migrated to MS365 which has allowed collaborative working throughout the pandemic with the use of MS Teams. With this new productivity suite, more opportunities to increase effectiveness will follow with the optimisation happening this year.

Fire infrastructure

NFRS have made significant improvements to their underlying infrastructure this year to enable the service to become more digitally focussed and improve collaboration. The rollout of Microsoft Teams has also enabled the service to work more effectively whilst remotely located.

Complaints against Northamptonshire Police

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 gave the PFCC additional responsibilities in relation to complaints. The aim of the legislation was to:

- Improve public confidence and satisfaction
- Provide a more customer focused service
- Increase transparency
- Make appeals more effective by providing greater independence
- Make the process more time efficient
- Simplify the system
- Enable trends and areas for concern to be identified more effectively

All PCCs became the relevant review body for less serious complaints and were given additional oversight and accountability responsibilities in relation to the complaints process. Prior to the implementation of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, a complaint was only considered recordable where it related to the conduct of a specific officer. Post February 2020, the definition of a complaint has been updated to 'any expression of dissatisfaction'.

The OPFCC Complaints and Customer Service Team is responsible for recording all complaints against the Force, the informal resolution of low-level complaints and for ensuring that all reviews are appropriately processed and considered. The standards of recording have shifted to a two-tier approach.

This means that complaints that are successfully service-recovered by the Customer Service Team are not formally recorded under schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act. They are logged using the same system as those formally recorded to ensure that there is continuity, a clear audit trail and to ensure accurate records are maintained.

Whilst the Customer Service Team are increasing the percentage of complaints dealt with by service recovery, they have effectively dealt with 196 complaints that did not need to be submitted to the Professional Standards Department and 570 other matters that would have otherwise required action from the Force.

We had estimated that the Customer Service Team would deal with approximately 1634 matters per year, which is likely to be slightly high given the figures below, however given that reviews are now being carried out by the Customer Service Team, this is a good balance.

Number of complaints against Northamptonshire Police 2020-21

Type of complaint	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Schedule 3	35	31	22	45	51	67	55	31	28	44	27	30	35	499
Service Recovery	17	12	11	23	17	12	15	24	23	42	32	42	35	305
Other	44	49	43	41	54	51	73	80	66	69	45	57	56	728
Total	96	92	77	109	122	130	143	135	117	155	104	129	126	1542

Holding the Chiefs to Account

Throughout the year, I hold formal Accountability Board meetings to hold both the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer to account for the performance of their respective organisations. These meetings help undertake one of my statutory duties on behalf of the residents of Northamptonshire and they form part of a wider ranging programme of assurance across the breadth of both policing and fire and rescue activities.

The Boards scrutinise areas of concern in relation to performance and service delivery at a strategic level and allow for open and constructive discussions in respect of performance, strategic budget setting, medium term financial planning and other matters requiring ongoing levels of assurance. The minutes of these meetings are publicly available on my website and can be found at: <https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/police-fire-accountability-boards/>

Over the last twelve months, I have raised a number of important and wide-ranging issues and where necessary sought further clarification that they are being dealt with and performance is improving. For Northamptonshire Police, these included:

Information relating to the positive outcome rates for the following areas for Northamptonshire Police:

- All Crime
- Burglary (residential and commercial)
- Rape and serious sexual offences
- Violence (all and by category)
- Domestic Abuse
- Knife Crime
- Shoplifting

From the information I received, I was assured that under the leadership of the Chief Constable and wider Chief Officer Team improvements were being seen in relation to positive outcomes. I am confident that the Chief Constable has a vision for Northamptonshire Police to become an excellent force and that positive outcome levels needs to form a part of the achievement of this vision. Whilst I accept that further improvements need to be made in this area, the force appear to understand where the gaps are and where improvements relating to peer performance need to be made. This important information is kept under constant review.

An annual update specifically relating to domestic abuse which covers the levels of recorded incidents and crimes over a three-year period and the rates of positive action and victim satisfaction. This year I was assured that the Force overall had a good response to domestic abuse, a fact borne out in some respects by the satisfaction levels of victims of these crimes. I believe there is a need for a fuller understanding and greater insight about what services victims expect or require when contacting the police to better meet victim needs at the point of contact. This is something that I will continue to work with the Force on.

The Force's work with the Information Commissioner's Office to improve their performance and I was assured that progress had been made in this area., notably in relation to the management of Freedom of Information requests. I was assured by the Chief Constable that progress was continuing in terms of performance and resource recruitment. This is an important part of the business in relation to transparency and I was provided with reassurance that plans were in place and on track to deliver and demonstrate good progress to the ICO.

Since the governance of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service was transferred to the OPFCC, a great deal of work has been undertaken to invest in the service and improve its performance. The Fire Accountability Board has played a key role in ensuring that we continue to build on the hard-won investment and improvements we have been able to deliver.

Over the last twelve months, I have sought information and assurance in relation to the performance of the service, as well as on a number of series issues that have far reaching implications for the safety of our residents.

I receive regular reports on the performance of the Fire and Rescue Service set against the measures and metrics contained within the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP). I have been able to commend the service for the significant improvements in pump availability and the increase in the number of firefighters achieved within the tight financial constraints facing the service. Overall the performance figures look positive and I have impressed on the Service the need to maintain the performance they had achieved.

Holding the Chiefs to Account

Following the Grenfell Tower Fire and the Manchester Arena bombing there has been some scrutiny of the London and Greater Manchester Fire Services in terms of their response at those scenes. Whilst it is accepted that the findings of the inquiries into these two incidents is not complete, I requested a level of assurance relating to the planned responses to this type of incident by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service. I was assured that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue service had done all that was possible for them to do in order to respond effectively to a range of potential terrorist or major incidents. I was also both assured and pleased that both NFRS and Northamptonshire Police had adopted the principles of The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) and that having a shared Fire and Police Joint Operations Team supported this. I welcomed the fact that NFRS was involved at a national level in supporting the agenda for some of this work, notably in some specialist roles and I have encouraged the Chief Fire Officer in conjunction

with the Chief Constable to ensure that joint agency training and operations took place where appropriate and possible, to include the scoping around a joint Fire and Police control room function.

Road traffic collisions can have a devastating and dramatic impact on victims and their families. Therefore, I requested a report on the progress being made to achieve an average response time (for all incidents) of 10 minutes as detailed within the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IPMP) 2019/22. I was pleased with the work undertaken to reduce response times overall and to increase appliance availability. I was reassured that good progress has been made in reducing response times to all types of incidents, as well as overall since the governance transfer in January 2019. Recognising that RTC response times are those that are most difficult to achieve in 10 minutes, I was reassured that the Chief Fire Officer has a plan to seek to reduce these further and I will receive a formal update in relation to this at a future accountability board.

The impact of this work can be seen in the positive feedback we have received from HMICFRS. Zoe Billingham, who is the HMICFRS Inspector for the East Midlands, has formally recognised that Northamptonshire Police has addressed many of the important areas of concern and has made good progress. She also states that we have put significant effort into reviewing and changing many aspects of the force. In relation to the Fire and Rescue Service, she has stated that overall, HMICFRS were pleased that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has improved how it manages its fire engine availability, and how it maintains and assures itself about the competence of its staff. They have recognised that considerable work that has been carried out to support these improvements. As a result, they now consider sufficient action has been taken to close the causes of concern they had.

This is very welcome and positive feedback and highlights the considerable hard work and determination of the OPFCC, Northamptonshire Police and The Fire and Rescue Service to improve our emergency services to deliver a safer Northamptonshire. This feedback has confirmed my view that effective progress is made and continues to be made in relation to the performance and service delivery of both Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service. There are still improvements to be made in both organisations however I remain confident that the positive progress seen so far will continue, with appropriate support and challenge from myself and my office.

2020-21 Budget and Financial Outturn

The PFCC is the recipient of all funding for both Fire and Policing. This includes all central funding, Business rates (Fire) and funding raised by the Council Tax precepts, one precept related to Fire and Rescue Services and one related to Policing and Crime reduction.

Under current legislation. Fire and Rescue and Police have separate council tax precepts, funding streams and budgets.

How this money is allocated in each service is a matter for the PFCC, except in relation to a small number of specific grants (such as those for counter-terrorism in policing). The PFCC consults the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer when setting his budgets and they provide professional advice and recommendations.

A public consultation carried out at the end of 2020 informed our 2020-21 budgets and considerations for the year. These were set out in detail in my precept proposals as considered by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in February 2020. Headlines include:

2020-21 Fire Budget

Total Budget £25.3m

98% allocated to Chief Fire Officer

1% allocated to OPFCC

1% allocated to Fund Capital Expenditure

Band D Council Tax £61.97

2020-21 Police Budget

Total Budget £146.8m

93% allocated to Chief Constable

4% Delivery and Commissioning

2% Funding Capital Expenditure

1% OPFCC

Band D Council Tax £255.04

Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC)

During the year I received and considered regular financial monitoring reports in Policing and Fire I scrutinised and challenged them in detail at the Force and Fire Accountability Board meetings. I also received regular financial monitoring reports for Fire. I provided regular financial update reports throughout the year to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable and Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA) produce Statement of Accounts each year and the deadline for the draft accounts to be published for 2020-21 is 31 August 2021.

Work is in progress to close the accounts for 2020-21. A detailed financial outturn, together with an assessment of reserves and financial outlook for both Police and Fire will be contained within the 2020-21 Statement of Accounts which are produced separately for each service. Work is underway to produce the three sets of accounts and it is anticipated that the statutory date will be met. The accounts will be subject to external audit.

Copies of both the draft and the final audited accounts will be available on both the Police and Crime Commissioner and Force websites in line with the statutory timescale.

The Joint Independent Audit Committee provides independent assurance on the adequacy of the corporate governance and risk management arrangements in place and the associated control environment, advising according to good governance principles and proper practices.

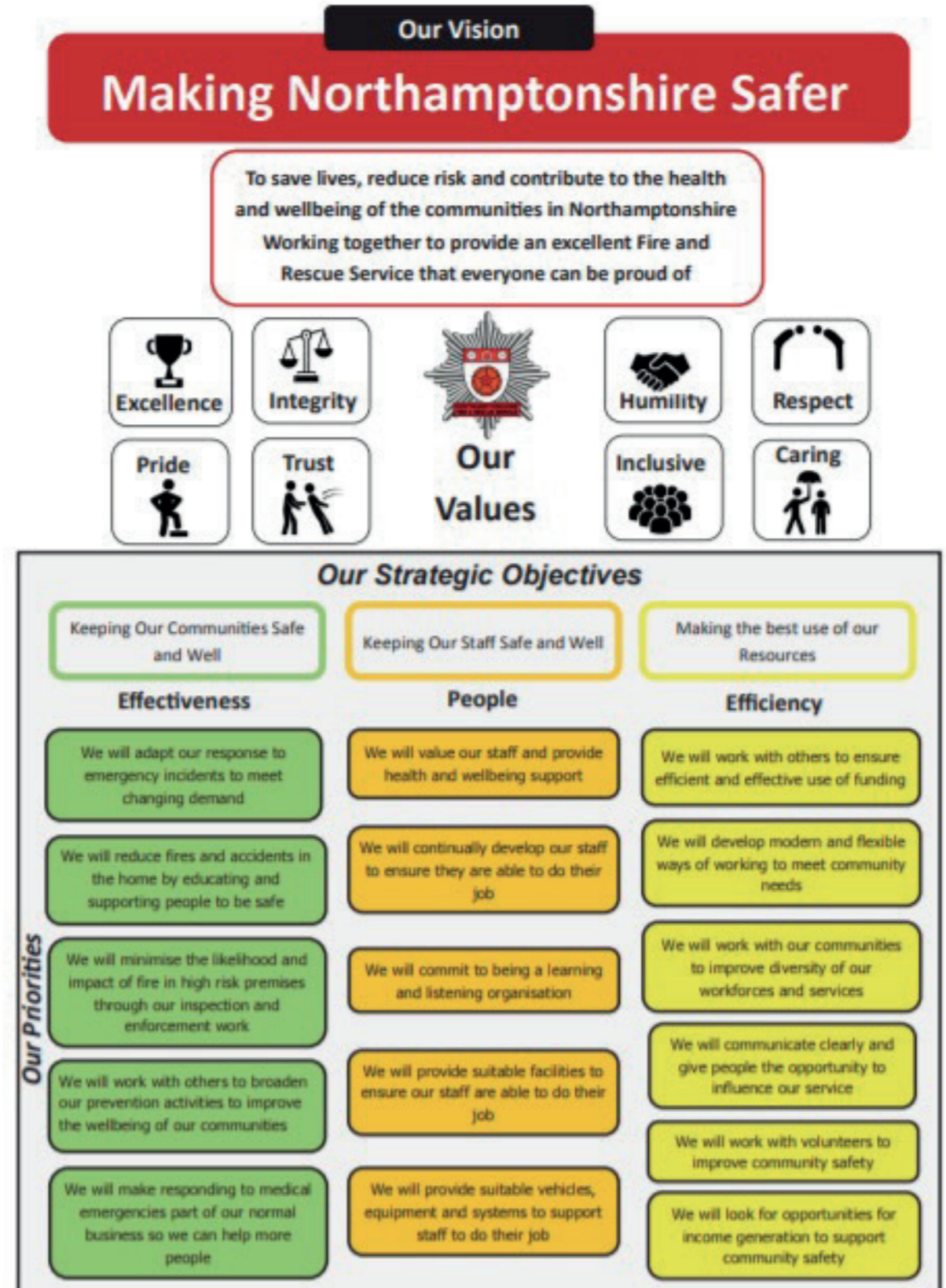
The Committee supports the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority and statutory officers in ensuring that effective governance are in place and functioning efficiently and effectively and making any recommendations for improvement.

The Committee produces an annual report and presents to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel annually.

Details of the Joint Independent Audit Committee, its members and its work can be found on the OPFCC website.

<https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/our-information/jiac/>

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service



Work Delivered by NFRS

Strategic Response Capability

The Service pledged to maintain a minimum of 14 fire engines to support our strategic response capability. Over the last 18 months, the Service has worked hard to achieve this and have increased average appliance availability from 16 to 20. This means that more Fire engines are available to immediately respond to incidents across the County.

Improved appliance availability has meant that average response times to all incidents within the County have improved month on month since the governance change to the PFCC. In December 2018, average response times were 11 minutes 36 seconds. This has now reduced to the agreed SOR time of a 10-minute average to all incidents. In addition, these improvements have been delivered against a backdrop of reducing overtime costs.

This improvement in strategic capability was crucial during the Christmas period when the service received over 300 calls to flooding incidents in the 48 hours from Christmas eve. This included the wide scale evacuation of the Billing Aquadrome caravan site which was completely flooded requiring specialist boat teams from 3 Fire Services as well as crews from across the County. This was in addition to wide scale flooding caused by the very heavy rainfall on Christmas eve which left many County residents the victim of surface water flooding.

NFRS Pandemic Response

Early in the pandemic, NFRS became one of the fire and rescue services asked to take part in work that included performing tasks such as driving Urgent Care Ambulance for East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) and the safe moving and handling of patients. In total, 25 firefighters from NFRS took part in supporting the work of EMAS during the Covid-19 pandemic.

All the firefighters who have supported this work for EMAS have volunteered to take this on and it has been a huge learning experience for them and a rewarding one. In order to carry out the work alongside Urgent Care colleagues in EMAS, firefighters undertook specialist training to gain the skills needed to perform their new roles. NFRS Firefighters remain ready to resume their role supporting EMAS should the need arise.

Firefighters also assisted in work around excess deaths by assisting in the movement of the deceased from the hospital mortuaries to the Temporary Mortuary set up at Wollaston. The Fire service volunteered to undertake this task as they wanted to utilise their experience to ensure that the deceased were treated with dignity and respect while being moved.

Throughout the pandemic, firefighters and non-operational staff worked to help those who are shielding and at particular risk from Covid-19 by volunteering to aid in pharmacy deliveries to people's homes. In total, firefighters from 11 of NFRS's on-call fire stations assisted in the deliveries. Support has also been provided by whole-time crews and members of NFRS's Home Safety Team. The Fire and Rescue Service were asked to help support with pharmacy deliveries quite soon after lockdown began as the pandemic left so many people particularly

vulnerable to the worst effects of Covid-19, so having access to medication deliveries at home went some way to minimising their daily risk levels.

Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service has won praise for its 'positive contribution' to the community during the coronavirus pandemic. The service has supported other agencies in a tough year by helping to drive ambulances, deliver food and medicine, check on care homes and homeless people, and transfer the deceased from hospitals to the temporary mortuary facility at Wollaston.

In August 2020, the Home Secretary asked HMICFRS to inspect how Fire & Rescue Services in England were responding to the pandemic. And in a recent letter to the Chief Fire Officer Darren Dovey, announcing her findings, Inspector Zoe Billingham said: "I am very grateful to your service for the positive contribution you have made to your community during the pandemic." The report shows how NFRS has managed to balance its COVID response while maintaining its core role of responding to calls from the public and attending emergencies.

Firefighters and staff have gone the extra mile to look after the vulnerable and to protect lives in Northamptonshire and I don't underestimate the pressure that comes with continuing the day job while taking on roles to support other organisations and I thank everyone for the way they have got on with the task in hand. I am glad that the report also notes how well fire and police have worked together in response to the pandemic, and that has laid the foundations for even closer working in the future.

Enabling Services

A great deal of work has been undertaken to deliver our Enabling Services function which is bringing together services such as HR, ICT, Fleet, Estates and Facilities and Finance across Police and Fire and Rescue to make them as efficient and effective as possible, which will help us to deliver improvements to our front-line services. We now have new Joint leads for all these services and the move to Darby House will bring geographically disparate teams from both services under the same roof for the first time in the history of both services.

A review of the ICT systems being used by the Fire and Rescue Service has been undertaken that will help deliver efficiencies and enable us to IT systems that can properly talk to each other and support front line operational working.

Finally, a review of the capital programme for the service and the work being undertaken to purchase new fire appliances has progressed well with 8 new appliances to be delivered over the next two years the tender having been awarded. In addition, the specification for a new aerial (high reach) appliance was released to the market before Christmas 2020 with the tender being awarded soon afterwards with a new aerial appliance now in build for delivery in the next year. The disposal of old fire appliances is undertaken through a framework to ensure the best return on them in order to meet best value requirements.

Prevention and Fire Protection

Following the closure of businesses and waste centres in the first national lockdown, Fire Protection officers were tasked with contacting and/or visiting all waste sites within the county to understand if there were any developing or emerging risks.

Within the first week of the first national lockdown, Protection officers undertook a significant change in the application of their legislative function. Due to the pandemic and the impacts of the lockdown, proactive physical visits ceased and the Service reviewed the community risk and reapplied staff in way that met the emerging risk.

The Service targeted care premises which provided accommodation to those who were both vulnerable and in need of assistance when evacuating a fire. As physical attendance to provide advice would create a risk of infection spread, the Service called all relevant premises before the end of April. The key aim was to discuss staffing levels, contingencies and evacuation which allowed for a focused discussion with managers of these premises and

open dialogue for assistance and advice. As the pandemic evolved and premises began to re-open, we targeted officer activity towards schools. These premises presented a significant community risk and, due to measures taken to become Covid secure, there was a clear risk that fire precautions could be compromised. The Service's experience of undertaking remote auditing activity under Covid restrictions has helped us develop systems and processes which allow the team to recommence the risk-based inspection program. Officers can now maximise their activity away from premises to help understand the risks onsite prior to their physical inspections and be better prepared to target their time onsite.

NFRS's prevention team continued to deliver Safe and Well checks to those who are most vulnerable in society in addition to being fully embedded with other partner agencies in the community resilience cell. This ensured that those who needed assistance were able to receive it. The prevention team also co-ordinated the Pharmacy delivery programme as previously mentioned.

Multi-agency response to COVID

As can be seen the Fire and Rescue Service have played a full part in the multi-agency COVID response. In addition to the activity already mentioned the Police and Fire Joint Operations Team (JOT) played a significant role in co-ordinating the many agencies responding by managing the Strategic Co-ordination Centre. The Service has been embedded as an active partner within the multi-agency arrangements since the beginning of the pandemic.

Response to the Grenfell Tower enquiry Phase 1

The Service is responding positively to the requirements that are coming from the Grenfell Tower enquiries, enquiries that are having an impact on the sector as a whole. The wide-ranging plan includes the equipping of all appliances with smoke hoods. The hoods offer a one-time use for 15 minutes of protection from breathing in toxic fumes during a fire. They were first deployed by firefighters from the Mounts, Moulton and Brixworth who attended a first-floor fire at a block of flats in Oakley Street, Northampton in the early hours of January 22. Station Commander Richie Stevens explained that the building was filled with very thick smoke and if they had not had the smoke hoods, there is a good chance that the man and woman who were rescued would have needed medical attention. Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service bought 120 smoke hoods using special funding secured from the Government to support developments after the Grenfell fire. Additionally, the Service has introduced new high-rise bags and has purchased new digital radios both of which will improve the incident command at high rise incidents.



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