

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

REPORT TO THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

7 JULY 2025

Report Title	Review of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire's Annual Report for 2024/25
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report is intended to set out the results of the review by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire's Annual Report for 2024/25.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire is required to publish an Annual Report on activity and progress with the delivery of key strategic outcomes in the previous year. The Annual Report must be reviewed by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel, resulting in the production of a report to the Commissioner. The Panel reviewed the Commissioner's Annual Report for 2024/25 at a public meeting held on 19 June 2025.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire:
- a) Considers this report by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel arising from its review of her Annual Report for 2024/25 carried out in accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 Section 28(4).
 - b) Provides the Panel with a response to this report and its recommendations set out in section 7 in accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 Section 12 Paragraph 4(a).

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendations are required to complete the Panel's review of the Annual Report for 2024/25 published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, in accordance with the Panel's statutory responsibilities.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Sections 12 and 28 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 state that a Police and Crime Commissioner must produce an "annual report".
- 5.2 The annual report must report on:
- a) the exercise of the Police and Crime Commissioner's functions in the financial year, and
 - b) the progress which has been made in the financial year in meeting the police and crime objectives in the police and crime plan.
- 5.3 The annual report must be sent to the relevant Police and Crime Panel as soon as practicable following its publication by the Commissioner.
- 5.4 The Panel must arrange for a public meeting of the Panel to be held as soon as practicable after it receives the annual report.
- 5.5 The Commissioner must attend the relevant meeting of the Panel to present the report and to answer such questions from the Panel about the report as the Panel members think appropriate.
- 5.6 The Panel must then review the annual report and make a report outlining any recommendations to the Commissioner. The report or recommendations of the Panel must also be published.
- 5.7 The Commissioner must provide a response to the Panel and must also publish that response.

6. Review of the Annual Report

- 6.1 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire has produced an Annual Report for 2024/25, which is available to view at: [PFCC Annual Report 2024-25](#). The Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel met in public on 19 June 2025 to review the Annual Report. The meeting was webcast live and a recording is available to view at: [West Northamptonshire Council - YouTube](#).
- 6.2 In presenting the Annual Report, the Commissioner emphasised the significant journey that had taken place over the previous year. At the point when she was elected, trust and confidence in policing had been at an all-time low. Effective policing required the consent of the public and a willingness to report concerns. However, there was massive under-reporting on important issues such as anti-social behaviour, retail crime, domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. At the same time, crime data still showed high incidences of serious violence, sexual violence and domestic abuse. This could not be addressed solely through policing but required partnership

working and changing attitudes in society. As Commissioner, her focus was on representing the community. She had sought to engage with as many different people and groups as possible, which informed her in holding to account the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer. She was very pleased that the two chiefs had also increased their own direct engagement with the community. Partners had responded well to the Commissioner and the creation of the new Public Safety Board, bringing together strategic leaders with control of local resources, would be a significant new step supporting effective partnership working in future. The Commissioner felt well served by her Office and the Annual Report showed the significant work it did on prevention and early intervention activity, managing complaints and compliments, and providing support services for victims and witnesses. The main role of the Commissioner was ultimately to hold to account the chiefs for the effectiveness of services. The change in direction on policing that had given renewed emphasis to neighbourhood policing in the county was welcome to see.

- 6.3 The Panel then questioned the Commissioner about the position presented in the Annual Report and the progress it demonstrated against the three missions set out in the Commissioner's Public Safety Plan for Northamptonshire. The Panel considered the following matters:

Strong partnerships – work collaboratively to support the vulnerable

- 6.4 A Panel member welcomed the priority given by the Commissioner to addressing domestic abuse but questioned whether the Commissioner was satisfied the Sunflower Centre was being adequately supported by all partners to reflect this. Housing as a factor in responding to domestic abuse and the need for police officers to be trained to provide good support to victims who had fled their home were also highlighted. The Commissioner commented that the Sunflower Centre was an important facility but did not receive enough funding. It was co-funded and she would be pursuing this with relevant partners. Northamptonshire Police had introduced a new strategy – Rapid – for responding to incidences of domestic abuse, accompanied by training for officers. This involved acting quickly to talk to the victim and remove the offender. The overall response provided to victims of domestic abuse was monitored in order to identify and address areas for improvement. This included the time it could take for cases to progress through the Criminal Justice system. The Commissioner was able to pursue this matter both as Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board and as the national lead police and crime commissioner for the Criminal Justice system.
- 6.5 A Panel member noted that the largest area of expenditure by the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner detailed in the Annual Report was £3.1m for victims and witnesses services, which was partly funded by £2.2m in grants from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). Reassurance was sought about whether this activity was dependent on the grant and the impact of this ceasing. The Panel was advised that the MoJ funding was made up of a core grant for the statutory victims and witnesses function and an additional element that funded specific work relating to domestic abuse. The core grant for 2025/26 had been reduced by a small amount, which the Commissioner had covered in the policing budget. The Office held contingency funds earmarked for victims and witnesses but not sufficient to cover the £2.2m grant funding. If this ceased the Commissioner would ultimately need to consider what non-statutory activity in this area continued in future.

Strong partnerships – tackle problems with a multi-agency approach

- 6.6 A Panel member noted that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) contributed to the local response to flooding but that this was not part of its statutory role. A lack of flood prevention work by local authorities on sites such as Billing Aquadrome would increase the demands on NFRS and affect its abilities to deliver the strategic priorities set by the Commissioner. Assurance was sought about the current risk of this and whether NFRS had sufficient opportunity to comment on future flooding risks associated with development proposals. The Commissioner advised that NFRS had a statutory duty to rescue people from flooding but should not be called on to pump out flood water. Not enough had been done in the county on flood prevention over a period of years and NFRS needed to have plans in-place to meet resulting demands. The Commissioner understood that the new owners of Billing Aquadrome were taking action regarding flood protection at the site. Fire and rescue was not a statutory consultee in the local planning process. This was an unhelpful situation that the Commissioner had raised at national level.

Visible, accessible community services – bring fire and police staff out into the community

- 6.7 A Panel member noted that the national Police Uplift Programme had operated for several years and sought to understand how this had affected Northamptonshire Police and the delivery of the Commissioner's priorities. The Commissioner responded that the force now had more officers than ever before but local population growth did not mean the county was better protected. The Chief Constable had advised that the force needed 2.8 officers per 1,000 population compared to the 1.9 it had. Northamptonshire was significantly disadvantaged by the current police funding model and the Commissioner continued to make the case for change to the Home Office and local MPs. The force would be recruiting 142 officers this year and was seeking to increase diversity in gender, ethnicity and age. The force had also received double funding for neighbourhood policing in the current year, which was very welcome. The Panel was further advised that the force had generally met its recruitment targets since the national Police Uplift Programme had commenced. This had resulted in the total number of officers increasing from 1,480 to 1,511. National funding for neighbourhood policing would enable additional officers to be put into neighbourhood teams, although this would still not reach the overall number of officers that the force required.
- 6.8 A Panel member supported the emphasis on neighbourhood policing, including local police bases. Further information was sought about plans to re-establish such a base in Corby. The Commissioner advised that the aim was to establish a police station with a front desk and neighbourhood and response teams in the same building. The town should not have been left without such a facility in the first place. Identifying a suitable building was proving to be a challenge even though this was being given significant attention. In the meantime an existing police front desk at the Corby Cube would be made more prominent. The force would look at different options for deploying officers in Corby if it was not possible to identify a building for this. A site for a facility with a front desk in Kettering had been identified and was now being acquired.

Strong partnerships – reduce reoffending

- 6.9 Panel members sought assurance about how the Commissioner worked with the Prison and Probation services as part of activity on reducing reoffending and about the use of mentoring with young people at risk of entering the Criminal Justice system. The Commissioner emphasised that reducing reoffending was a high priority for her. This should involve understanding the factors that caused people to offend. A large amount of work was being done at national level on reoffending, for example on supporting ex-prisoners into employment. This was one key factor that could prevent reoffending. Locally, the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner funded two projects supporting women coming out of prison or on the edge of criminality. The Commissioner felt that young people should not be treated as a single group as individuals' views and needs could differ by gender or age. She was keen to work with partners on early intervention to keep young people out of the Criminal Justice system. This needed to be informed by engagement with young people themselves.

Strong partnerships – invest in partnerships to reduce harm

- 6.10 A Panel member requested that the Panel be provided with the outcomes of the University of Northampton evaluation of the three local schemes funded by the countywide Serious Violence Prevention Partnership. The Commissioner agreed that this could be done. The Commissioner went on to emphasise that evaluating the effectiveness of activity was crucial for her. A vast range of projects relating to community safety was carried out across the country. The key question for her was how well anything worked, in order to maximise the benefit derived from the public money used by her Office.

Visible, accessible community services – put prevention first

- 6.11 A Panel member referred to the potential benefits of adopting the situational crime prevention model, which sought to reduce crime by making changes to the environment in which it occurred that increased the risk or reduced the reward for perpetrators. The Commissioner commented that when she took office she had been concerned at the degree of lawlessness affecting local communities. She wanted to consider different options for addressing this, for example by using the approach of designing out crime. Technology such as AI and facial recognition would also contribute to increasing the risks to perpetrators.

Professionalism and standards – setting the tone from the top

- 6.12 A Panel member sought assurance that the Commissioner was confident in the effectiveness of the force's vetting arrangements after the recent vetting review. The Commissioner emphasised that vetting had been a significant concern following the dismissal of Nick Adderley. The new Chief Constable had re-vetted the force's senior leadership team without the Commissioner needing to request this. The force had also increased its focus on vetting more generally, including joining up local and national systems. The force was now setting the pace on this matter nationally.

Visible, accessible community services – rebuild trust and confidence

- 6.13 A Panel member challenged the Commissioner on whether the data presented in the Annual Report provided a good picture of actual performance, including in comparison with previous years. The Annual Report stated, for example, that the force had received 385 calls a day to 999 during the past year. It would be helpful for the Annual Report to include more comparative data in future to enable comparisons on annual performance to be made. The Commissioner responded that additional resources had been put into the force control room during the year to address an issue with response times. This had resulted in improved performance. Specific domestic abuse and mental health support was also located in the control room, which made a difference to outcomes for victims and to the force's effectiveness. It was subsequently highlighted to the Panel that previous Annual Reports were published, which enabled comparisons between reported performance to be made. Consideration could be given to future Annual Reports including more information showing the direction of travel not just the position at a certain point. Further information on this could also be provided to the Panel if requested.

7. Outcomes of the Review

- 7.1 The Panel considered any conclusions or recommendations that it wished to make on the Annual Report. Panel members did not challenge the picture given in the Annual Report of the progress being made by the Commissioner. The potential to improve the performance data presented in future was reiterated. The scope for further scrutiny by the Panel of areas in the Annual Report was also highlighted.
- 7.2 At the conclusion of discussion the Panel resolved that:
- a) **The Panel notes the Annual Report for 2024/25.**
 - b) **The Panel recommends that in future the Annual Report includes more data to show the direction of travel in addition to current performance.**
 - c) **The Panel requests that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner presents further information to the Panel meeting on 18 September 2025 on the direction of travel against key performance metrics.**

8. Background Papers

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Terms of Reference