

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

REPORT TO THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

31 JULY 2026

Report Title	Review of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire's Fire and Rescue Statement for 2025/26
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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 Fire and Rescue Statement for 2025/26.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire is required to publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The Fire and Rescue Statement 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 Fire and Rescue Statement for 2025/26 at a public meeting held on 18 June 2026.

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 the Fire and Rescue Statement for 2025/26 carried out in accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 Section 28(4) and the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 Schedule A2 Section 8.
 - 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 Fire and Rescue Statement for 2025/26 published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, in accordance with the Panel's statutory responsibilities.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England sets out government priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. Every fire and rescue authority must have regard to the National Framework in carrying out its functions. Every authority must publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the National Framework, referred to as "the Fire and Rescue Statement." This requirement applies to Police and Crime commissioners who take on the functions of a fire and rescue authority under the provisions of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, as is the case in Northamptonshire.
- 5.2 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (sections 12 and 28) as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017 Schedule 1 requires that the Fire and Rescue Statement published by a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is subject to scrutiny by the relevant Police, Fire and Crime Panel.
- 5.3 The Fire and Rescue Statement must be sent to the relevant 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 Fire and Rescue Statement.
- 5.5 The Commissioner must attend the relevant meeting of the Panel to present the Fire and Rescue Statement and to answer such questions from the Panel about it as the Panel members think appropriate.
- 5.6 The Panel must then review the Fire and Rescue Statement 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 Fire and Rescue Statement

- 6.1 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire has produced a Fire and Rescue Statement for 2025/26, which is available to view at: [PFCC Fire and Rescue Statement 2025-26](#). The Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel met in public on 18 June 2026 to review the Fire and Rescue Statement. The meeting was webcast live and a recording is available to view at: [West Northamptonshire Council - YouTube](#).

- 6.2 In presenting the Fire and Rescue Statement, the Commissioner emphasised that fire and rescue was part of the overall business of keeping communities safe and sound and that the Statement gave an insight into the range of work carried out by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in the county. The overriding focus of this work was on protecting the public. NFRS also made a significant contribution to preventing harm and dealing with local issues such as hoarding. The Panel was further advised that completion of the annual assurance statement was a statutory requirement. The Statement linked in with the strategic priorities set out in the Commissioner's Public Safety Plan and with NFRS operational plans. The Statement set out the arrangements in place to give effective assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. There was significant continuing work at national level on setting standards for fire and rescue, furthering professionalisation and embedding good practice across all services. NFRS took this very seriously and was an example of how national priorities could be translated into local action.
- 6.3 The Panel considered the Fire and Rescue Statement and questioned the Commissioner about her assurance in the effectiveness of local services and the capacity to meet current and future challenges.
- 6.4 A Panel member noted that the Statement referred to NFRS having completed a full review of the delivery of leadership training in 2025/26. Reassurance was sought about the impact of this work. It was highlighted that the last HMICFRS inspection of NFRS had resulted in requires improvement gradings for ensuring fairness and promoting diversity and for promoting the right values and culture. Effective leadership was key to making improvements in these areas. The Commissioner responded that a further inspection was currently underway and should show the progress that had been made. The Commissioner went on to highlight a change that had been made to firefighters' uniforms as a practical example of leadership that demonstrated a focus on promoting diversity and a good organisational culture. The NFRS senior leadership had listened to a concern raised by firefighters and had involved them in developing a solution to it that had then been implemented effectively.
- 6.5 A Panel member sought the Commissioner's views about the emerging challenges she was facing after holding the role for two years, in addition to ongoing issues reflected in data on firefighter recruitment and retention and home fire safety visits (HSVs). The Commissioner agreed that there were many continuing challenges for fire and rescue in Northamptonshire, including the low level of national funding and the poor condition of the NFRS estate. She had invested significantly in the NFRS fleet: eight new vehicles had been purchased and another 10 were currently on-order. An example of an unforeseen challenge that had arisen was that new vehicles had been fitted with the wrong exhaust system, which had resulted in increased maintenance costs and could have affected the number of vehicles available to deploy. The NFRS senior leadership had taken immediate action to address this issue once it was identified. The Panel was subsequently advised that the number of HSVs carried out in 2025/26 was higher than in 2024/25. There had also been a significant improvement relating to targeting HSVs. The proportion of HSVs that involved vulnerable or high-risk households had increased from 70 per cent in 2024/25 to 86.3 per cent in 2025/26. More HSVs were being carried out but they were also being used better.

7. Outcomes of the Review

7.1 The Panel considered any conclusions or recommendations that it wished to make on the Fire and Rescue Statement. It was highlighted that the Panel should consider the outcomes of the current HMICFRS inspection of NFRS when these were reported. The Panel heard that this was likely to be towards the end of 2026.

7.2 At the conclusion of discussion the Panel resolved that:

The Panel notes the Fire and Rescue Statement for 2025/26.

8. Background Papers

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

Policing and Crime Act 2017

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Terms of Reference