



ASSURANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is the locally elected official to be the voice of the public, on matters of crime, policing and fire and rescue. The role of Commissioner has a variety of functions and responsibilities, Key amongst these is the responsibility to hold the relevant Chief Fire Officer to account.
- 1.2 In order to foster and maintain a productive and transparent working relationship between NFRS and OPFCC an environment of open and at times informal discussion is required.
- 1.3 There is also an equal need to have more formalised assurance and accountability processes between the Commissioner and Chief Fire Officer that allows the effective discharge of the responsibilities of both of them.
- 1.4 Such a process, is designed to provide the Commissioner with the required level of assurance in matters of business as usual and individual areas of concern.
- 1.5 For such a process to be at its most effective it should be agreed with and understood by the Fire and Rescue Service and Commission, where roles and requirements are clear and the process adds value to service delivery. The Commissioner needs to be clear on the matters of concern that he/she may require reassurance on and the Fire and Rescue Service should be provided with clarity on the matters that they are being asked for reassurance in relation to.
- 1.6 Such processes, while trying to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy need to have some structure in order to avoid unnecessary duplication, provide clarity to all parties and support effective delivery of a policing service, as well as meeting the needs of the paragraphs above.

2 ASSURANCE PROCESS

- 2.1 Assurance and accountability need to be iterative and ongoing.
- 2.2 The OPFCC and Fire and Rescue Service both have key roles to play in this as a process. While there is a place for a formalised meeting relating to matters of accountability, this should only be a part of a wider process of assurance.
- 2.3 A wider process of assurance requires subject leads in the OPFCC to be linked into counterparts within the Fire and Rescue Service, as well as partners external to the Service, to attend appropriate meetings relating to their subject lead areas and engage in ongoing dialogue relating to matters they lead on. It also requires an internal OPFCC process of accountability for matters that they are responsible for the delivery of.
- 2.4 Arrangements such as those in 2.3, ought to allow for the identification and in many cases resolution of issues of concern and in cases where this is not the case should bring greater clarity to the actual points of reassurance the PFCC requires to be asked of NFRS.
- 2.5 Attendance at appropriate meetings by subject leads in the OPFCC, as described at 2.3 will be subject to ongoing discussion and review to ensure that it remains focused and proportionate.
- 2.6 Beyond the process of assurance that is described above there will be a more formalised process of accountability in place. This will be in the form of a structured accountability board.

2.7 The key principles of this accountability board will be:

- Board meetings will be held monthly
- The OPFCC will provide clarity in the form of a written notification of the matters that require a response at the board. This will include specific questions to be answered where this is required and the form in which this needs to be delivered (verbal/written/presentation).
- The meeting will be serviced by an agenda.
- Key discussions and decisions will be recorded via decision record
- Records of these board meetings will be published on the OPFCC website.
- Administration of these meetings will be undertaken by OPFCC.

2.8 Issues requiring responses at an accountability meeting can be raised through a variety of means but generally will arise from one of three ways:

- From the schedule of assurance (see 3).
- From risk registers (either OPFCC or NFRS)
- Bespoke matters

3 SCHEDULE OF ASSURANCE

3.1 Part of the support mechanism for the accountability board, will be a schedule of assurance. This will be a document provided to the service that identifies matters that will require regular formalised updates to be provided to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, as part of the assurance and accountability process.

4 MEETING ATTENDANCE

4.1 Attendance at appropriate meetings by subject matter leads has been described at 2.3 and 2.5.

4.2 Attendance at the formalised accountability board meetings will be:

- Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
- Monitoring Officer (OPFCC)
- Director with responsibility for accountability (OPFCC)
- Chief Fire Officer
- Assistant Chief Fire Officers x 2

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES WILL BE BY INVITE OF THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OR CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, DEPENDENT ON THE MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION.