

**REVIEW OF THE  
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK**

**INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**22 JUNE 2021**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide members of the Independent Audit Committee with the outcomes of an internal review of the Corporate Governance Framework.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Corporate Governance Framework for North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority was first published in April 2019. It consists of:

- **A Statement of Corporate Governance** - making reference to the statutory framework and local policy
- **Code of Corporate Governance** - setting out how the core principles will be implemented
- **Scheme of Corporate Governance** – defining the parameters within which the corporation sole will conduct their business including delegations and consents

2.2 The last eighteen months have seen significant change with; refinements to the meeting structure for decision making, new internal governance arrangements within the Fire and Rescue Service, a new Principal Officer Team, the move to a joint Police and Fire headquarters and the launch of enableNY, a formal collaboration providing shared support services for North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

**3.0 REVISIONS**

3.1 Given the significant changes to the Service's internal governance arrangements were only introduced in April 2020, the annual framework review was delayed to give changes time to bed in.

3.2 In June 2020, minor proposed changes to the Corporate Governance Framework and review areas were sent to the Committee for information. These changes are highlighted in yellow in Appendix 1 and include:

- Expressions and definitions moved to the start of the document (from 3.3.5 to page 4).
- Role of the Police Fire & Crime Panel defined in more detail (3.2.8).
- Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) responsibilities allocated to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (3.6.18).
- Additional delegation in relation to the settlement of litigation, allowing settlement by North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service up to £10k unless high profile, public interest or

risk to the Commissioner. Settlements above £10k to require Treasurer/Chief Finance Officer authorisation (3.6.24).

- References to a Monitoring Officer Protocol to match the terms of the Local Policing Body equivalent.
- Refreshed meeting structure diagram reflecting Service's internal governance arrangements (Appendix A).
- Amendments throughout to outdated references to "Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive"

3.3 In March 2021, the Corporate Governance Framework was comprehensively reviewed by a Working Group attended by the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Chief Finance Officer. Proposed changes were agreed in principle at the Commissioner's Executive Board in April 2021, to take forward to the Independent Audit Committee for approval.

Key changes are as follows (changes tracked in Appendix 1):

- Legal references updated.
- Reference section made comprehensive and some naming conventions updated.
- Adjustment to the review provisions (1.5.1).
- Explicit cross-reference in the Introduction, to the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service values and the national Fire Service Code of Ethics.
- New North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service values included in full (Appendix D).
- Updated references to the Fire and Rescue Plan and the Risk and Resource Model throughout.
- A more accurate wording dealing with how the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner may extend, amend or withdraw delegations (3.1.1).
- An acknowledgement in the Scheme of Corporate Governance of the importance of the collegiate 'house style' of governance (3.1.1).
- An adjustment to the provision at para 3.2.6 making clear that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner sets the strategic vision and holds the Chief Fire Officer to account for delivery.
- A cross-reference at para 3.4.1 to the need for North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to maintain a sound system of policies, procedure and guidance in respect of operational matters and internal governance – and for meeting terms of reference to be established and kept up to date.
- An explicit reference at para 3.6.36 to the responsibility of the Chief Fire Officer for the health, safety and welfare of staff engaged within North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Removing reference to 'key decisions' - replacing them with reference to 'significant public interest decisions' and setting out the expectation that the Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer liaise dynamically about such matters and ensure that the Commissioner is engaged in them in a timely way supported by full advice and guidance.

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND KEY ACTIONS**

4.1 Members are asked to consider and approve the revisions to the Corporate Governance Framework for publication.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Corporate Governance Framework Version 8.0 – highlighted/tracked changes

## **AUTHOR**

Fiona Kinnear

Policy and Scrutiny Officer (Fire & Rescue) for the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

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