



**The Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime
Commissioner's
Commissioning Framework**

December 2018

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) is a directly elected individual to ensure that the public services of policing, fire and rescue, criminal justice and community safety are reflective of community needs and desires. This is articulated through the Police and Crime Plan and the Fire and Rescue Plan for Northamptonshire.
- 1.2 The PFCC is also statutorily bound to ensure that both policing and fire and rescue services are efficient and effective in Northamptonshire. The PFCC is therefore able to use their resources to commission services from any organisation to ensure the best possible services are available for the public to satisfy the PFCC's statutory responsibilities and to deliver the outcomes and priorities contained within either the Police and Crime Plan or the Fire and Rescue Plan.
- 1.3 This Commissioning Framework outlines the principles and approach which underpin the PFCC's commissioning decisions which will be taken and delivered in a robust, consistent, transparent and fair way.

2 What is Commissioning?

- 2.1 Commissioning is, at its simplest, the process of planning, agreeing and monitoring services. It is more complex than simply just procuring services or goods. Commissioning is the process of understanding need, engaging with users and service providers, specifying requirements and then taking a decision on the best way to provide that service (e.g. internally, outsourced, procured etc). Quality assurance should take place throughout. Commissioning seeks to deliver the most efficient, effective and sustainable way to deliver required outcomes.
- 2.2 Procurement is in some circumstances a part of commissioning. Procurement is the acquisition of goods or services that usually includes a contract. Contract Standing Orders should be followed for any commissioning process that includes the need to procure a service. The most notable example of where commissioning does not require procurement is where the PFCC commissions Northamptonshire Police or Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service to be the delivery agency.
- 2.3 For Northamptonshire PFCC, commissioning is fundamental to what the office does. The PFCC is, fundamentally, a commissioning organisation. The PFCC will seek to commission services from Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue, the wider public sector, voluntary and community groups and the private sector to achieve, and be held to account for delivering, the outcomes of the Police and Crime Plan and/or the Fire and Rescue Plan.
- 2.4 In theory, this means that the total budget of the PFCC will be available for commissioning. In practice much of the funding will be devolved to the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer for the delivery of specified functions and outcomes. In essence, this is a commissioning relationship.
- 2.5 The PFCC has the power to commission services. In practice this is discharged by the Office of the PFCC (OPFCC). This document therefore makes reference to the OPFCC discharging the powers of the PFCC.

3 Principles

3.1 The OPFCC will undertake all commissioning activity with a focus on these principles:

- **Outcome-based.**

The OPFCC will primarily focus on what is achieved (the outcome) rather than resources put in (the inputs) or what is done (the outputs). This does not mean that at times inputs and outputs are not important to the OPFCC and therefore will be specified as part of a commissioning process. But the main focus will always be on seeing the desired effects of the commissioning process happen for the benefit of the people of Northamptonshire. Measures of success will be put in place for every commissioning process.

- **Capacity building.**

The OPFCC will seek to ensure that every commissioning activity focuses on long term, sustainable solutions to achieve the outcomes required. The aim will be to help organisations and ultimately the public to be more self-sustaining and therefore have greater capacity and resilience for future challenges.

- **Value for Money.**

The OPFCC will always seek the most efficient and effective service to deliver the outcomes specified. This does not mean the cheapest solution is always the best as the benefits may be greater with more initial expense.

- **Participative.**

The OPFCC is committed to consulting and engaging the right people at the right times. This will occur during the design of any commissioning specification to ensure that the specification best reflects need. There is a commitment to engage with users of any commissioned service during the life of the service to ensure that the service continues to meet the needs of the public.

- **Fairness and Transparency.**

The OPFCC is committed to ensuring that all commissioning activity is conducted fairly, with no favours being shown to any organisation or individual. Information will be made available to those involved in the commissioning process and clear information will be provided to the public in line with the Decision Making Framework of the OPFCC outlined in the Corporate Governance Framework. Policing and Fire and Rescue budgets for commissioning will be kept separate and distinct.

- **Clear process and governance.**

The OPFCC will adopt clear processes for any commissioning activity. This Framework document helps to outline the processes that will be undertaken for commissioning. Where the commissioning process includes procurement, the OPFCC will ensure that the OPFCC Contract Standing Orders, within the Corporate Governance Framework, are complied with. All commissioned activity should have clear governance arrangements to manage the delivery of the commissioned activity. This usually will include a formally agreed contract.

- **Promote improvement and innovation.**

The OPFCC will focus on evidence based practice and interventions from the outset. The OPFCC though will not 'step away' once something is commissioned. Instead the OPFCC will remain active commissioners and contract managers ensuring that improvement is sought throughout the life of the arrangement or contract. The focus on evidence will not prevent innovative solutions being trialled and evaluated to enable learning. In that respect the OPFCC will be risk aware rather than risk averse and therefore be prepared for some interventions to fail.

Commissioning Approach and Application

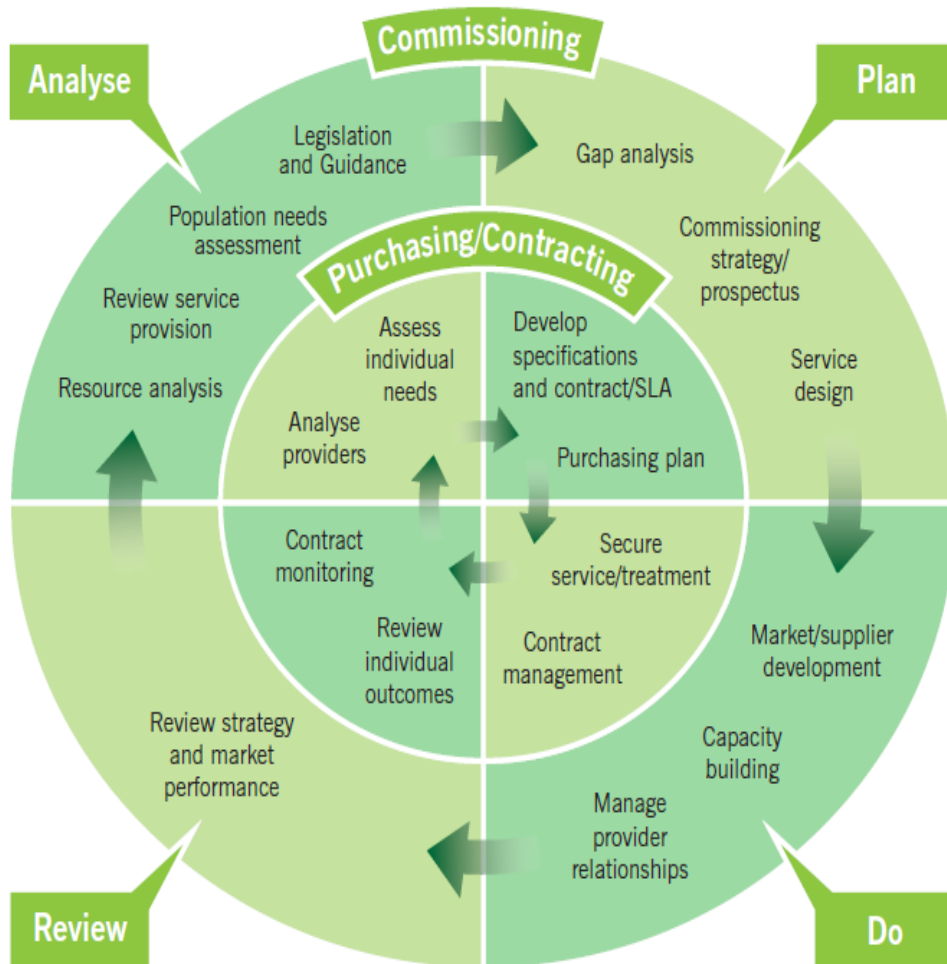
All activity the OPFCC promotes should be considered commissioning, whether this change is then delivered 'in house' or not. Fundamentally the OPFCC is a commissioning organisation. Therefore this Framework applies to all activity the OPFCC does, whoever the 'provider' of the service is (including Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service).

A wide variety of types of commissioning are available to the OPFCC, both with funding and without funding and with partners or alone. The OPFCC will seek to utilise the most appropriate method of commissioning depending on the outcomes that are to be achieved. This will include direct commissioning of the Police, Fire and Rescue Service or others to deliver a particular service or initiative as well as jointly commissioning activity that meets the needs of the OPFCC and other organisations, providing a greater benefit for the public money than if the OPFCC commissioned alone.

For any activity the commissioning cycle over later pages of this Framework will be adopted and governance arrangements will be put in place for every commissioned activity.

The Commissioning Cycle

The following is the cycle for commissioning adopted for this framework.



The overarching strategic documents for the Commissioner is the Police and Crime Plan and the Fire and Rescue Plan. These inform the Commissioning Intentions and therefore the Commissioning Cycle for individual activity. It is for the OPFCC to commission activity based on the Police and Crime Plan and/or the Fire and Rescue Plan.

Analyse and Understand

Any outcomes-based commissioning is not starting with a blank page. There is always some activity, interventions or existing services that are in place. Therefore this phase of the cycle is about understanding the baseline position and understanding the evidence-base within which the newly commissioned initiative or service will be operating.

- The outcomes desired will be clarified in this phase in greater specificity than the strategic plans afford. This will focus attention on what the intended effect of the commissioning will be.
- Any existing service provision will be considered and understood. This will both consider who the service providers are and what service they provide, understanding both the scope and the nature of the services that are currently provided.
- A broader understanding of the local, national and international evidence base will be undertaken. This will identify what activities are proven to work and emerging trends that could be applied to Northamptonshire.
- A needs assessment will be undertaken in this phase, utilising both existing data and information and potentially specifically collected data. This will seek to understand the gaps in service provision from the baseline position. The needs assessment will include consultation and engagement activity, both that undertaken by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner more generally and specifically with potential service users for any commissioning arrangement. The focus of this will be on the quality rather than quantity of this information.
- Any legislation or other guidance will be reviewed within this phase.
- The OPFCC will engage with any relevant partners at this stage to understand their commissioning and service provision intentions to ensure that public money is used efficiently and effectively.
- Resourcing will be considered at this stage at a high level to understand both affordability and cost effectiveness.
- The impact of any potential decisions should also be considered at this stage. An Equality Impact Assessment will be developed at this stage and kept under consistent review throughout the cycle. Impact Assessments should consider potential future impacts as well as immediate impacts.
- The OPFCC will publish any relevant information from this stage to enable customers, users and providers to see the basis on which decisions are being taken.

Plan

Following a review of the need to understand the current situation for any commissioning process, the OPFCC will begin the planning phase. This phase produces the plan, specification and service design for the commissioned activity.

- The OPFCC will undertake a gap analysis between the desired outcome and the current baseline position. This will mean the size of the challenge is understood and the distance to travel is clear. This will shape the requirements for the commissioned activity.
- The OPFCC will engage with service providers, including Northamptonshire Police and/or Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, at this stage. This will be for them to help to shape the activities and possibilities to address the identified gap.
- The OPFCC will also seek to engage with people who will use the service or those who the activity is seeking to benefit. Testing of draft specifications will occur at this stage.
- The OPFCC, having received the feedback from the engagement activity, will produce a full and final specification for the commissioned activity. This specification will include the outcomes to be delivered, the performance indicators that will be measured, the expected outputs from the activity and a milestone plan for delivery. A standard template ensuring consistent information will be used by the OPFCC.
- Specifications will be grounded in evidence but will allow for innovation and transformation. The analysis undertaken will ensure that services commissioned are new rather than duplicate services.
- At this stage the OPFCC will also consider the most appropriate means of commissioning. This may be with a procurement process or without a procurement process and may be in conjunction with a partner for a co-commissioning approach or the OPFCC may commission directly themselves.
- If a procurement process is being used, the process will be planned at this stage to be the most efficient and effective to deliver the required outcomes, ensuring compliance with Contract Standing Orders.

Do

The OPFCC (working with partners where that commissioning strategy has been chosen) will seek to bring about the new service and then 'hold to account' and contract manage the provider of the services through this phase. A key part of this phase will be building capacity in whoever is being commissioned to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public.

- If procurement is being used, then a transparent and fair assessment of the potential providers at this stage will be undertaken to ensure that the best value for money is being achieved for the public of Northamptonshire. Any procurement will meet the requirements of Contract Standing Orders.
- In any scenario, the OPFCC will agree with the providers (including if the provider is Northamptonshire Police) the detailed project plan for the delivery and implementation of the new commissioned service.
- The OPFCC will support the provider through the mobilisation phase helping to ensure successful delivery. Ultimately though, the OPFCC will also be holding the provider to account for meeting their obligations (whether under a formal contract or otherwise).
- Once implemented, the OPFCC will be active 'contract managers' (whether there is a legal contract or not) to ensure that the intended outcomes and agreed delivery mechanism occurs. This will involve regular and robust monitoring of key performance indicators. The regularity of the review will depend on the size and risk of the commissioned service and contract. The Contract Manager (as defined later in this document) will be responsible for the monitoring process.
- The frequency of the contract management process will be determined by the size and length of contract that is being managed. The approach the OPFCC will take will be one that seeks to deliver ever better and therefore one of service improvement, the aim being to ensure that service provision becomes sustainable, ultimately with reduced public funding. However there will also be consequences included within the contract arrangements for failure to deliver.
- The OPFCC will ensure that those who were engaged during earlier phases are kept informed of progress during this phase.

Review

The OPFCC will ensure that a constant review process will take place as the commissioned activity is taking place. This will help to inform any re- or de-commissioning decisions.

- Delivery will be judged against the original outcomes intended from the commissioned activity.
- Those who have been involved in earlier phases of the cycle will be engaged during this phase. This will include directly engaging service users of the commissioned activity. This will inform whether the intended outcomes are being seen and felt by the intended service users.
- Evidence will be gathered together and a formal review point will be decided and documented by the OPFCC. This will be shared with the service provider. The document will also give an indication on future decisions for the OPFCC to take on future commissioning intentions.
- Information gathered during the review phase will also be used to seek to drive performance improvement from the existing service provider.
- The OPFCC will, where necessary, seek to gain independent evaluation of the activity to understand whether the activity 'works' or not.
- The OPFCC will also review the strategy that was set for commissioning in the 'plan' phase in light of what has been learned in the 'do' phase. This will ensure lessons are learned for future commissioning activity.

De-commissioning

De-commissioning can take place at any point within the commissioning cycle. The OPFCC will de-commission based on evidence and based on the policy priorities of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

- The OPFCC will ensure that de-commissioning process is triggered through an understanding of the evidence base and through developing a clear business case for change.
- The OPFCC will seek to have open and transparent conversations with the provider at the earliest opportunity to discuss thinking in relation to de-commissioning.
- Where de-commissioning is occurring, the OPFCC will ensure that best practice change management principles are employed to ensure that any change in service has the least impact on service users possible.
- Decisions will be made in keeping with the OPFCC Decision Making framework within the Corporate Governance Framework. This will include the OPFCC considering any wider impacts on the system that the decision may have.
- For any de-commissioning, the OPFCC will ensure that there is a transition plan and exit strategy in place and delivered.
- A review will be undertaken as part of a de-commissioning process to ensure that learning is captured.

Resourcing Commissioning

Improving outcomes using this commissioning framework is not the responsibility of any one person with the OPFCC. The stakeholders and partners collaborating on any particular commissioning activity will depend on the outcomes to be achieved. OPFCC will ensure that any commissioning activity is adequately resourced, harnessing the skills and expertise that exist, trust their ability and input, and work together to make the difference and make Northamptonshire a safer place to live, work and visit. . The OPFCC will seek to be clear on who is responsible for each aspect and stage of commissioning activity to ensure it is as effective as possible. The different roles of commissioning and procurement teams through the commissioning cycle can sometimes cause confusion, especially during a procurement exercise, and it is important that all stakeholders involved understand their roles.

Role in Commissioning	Definition
Political	The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner defines the outcomes they require for the people of Northamptonshire set out in the Police and Crime Plan and/or the Fire and Rescue Plan
Strategic	The Management Team balance the required outcomes with statutory obligations, practical and financial constraints, assessment of need and demand, to define the outputs they require from their provider partners, within the total resources available
Operational	<p>Senior staff and officers deliver the projects and services to achieve the required outputs and outcomes as directed. There are two specific functions (note: these can be carried out by more than one individual or both functions may be performed by the same individual):</p> <p><u>Lead Commissioner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should be a service manager i.e. the person who leads on the process of commissioning. Typically they will have subject knowledge. • They should develop the detailed service specification and requirements and make recommendations to the OPFCC. • Typically the lead commissioner is involved in the Analyse, Plan and Review parts of the Commissioning Cycle. <p><u>Contract Manager</u></p>

- This may or may not be the same person as the Lead Commissioner.
- They manage the relationship with service providers and implement communications and engagement plans.
- Ensure that performance information informs the commissioning cycle.
- Develops with providers business cases for change.
- Manages the operational de-commissioning process.

Typically the Contract Manager is involved in the Do and Review parts of the Commissioning Cycle.

The OPFCC Involvement Team will provide capacity to assist in engaging and consulting with stakeholders

Finance, procurement and legal resource will also be required for particular commissioning activities.