

MINUTES AND ACTIONS

DRAFT



Meeting	Independent Audit Committee
Date and time	Thursday 25th June 2026, 13:30 – 15:30hrs
Location	Haigh Conference Room and via Teams
Chair	Roman Pronyszyn

Attendees:

Name	Role
Roman Pronyszyn (RP)	Committee Member & Chair
Dr Stuart Green (SG)	Committee Member & Vice Chair
Heather Cook (HC)	Committee Member
Michael Porter (MP)	YNYCA Assistant Director of Resources (Deputy s73 Officer for Police, Fire & Crime Functions)
Paul Clarke (PC)	YNYCA Governance & Assurance Manager
Garry Mackay (GM)	NYFRS Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Ben Illsley (BI)	NYFRS Area Manager - Director for Service Improvement and Assurance
Charlie French (CF)	NYFRS Director of Service Design and Delivery
Samantha Parker (SP)	NYFRS Head of Finance
Matt Stacey (MS)	RSM UK Risk Assurance Services – Managing Consultant
Ian McClelland (IM)	Governance Support Officer

Apologies:

Name	Role
Lisa Stitt (LS)	NYFRS & NYP Assistant Chief Officer
Dan Harris (DH)	RSM UK Risk Assurance Services – Director

Items and Decisions:

No.	Discussion	Outcome / Decision
1.	Attendance, Apologies and Opening Comments. Attendance and apologies are noted above.	
2.	Declaration of Interest. There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	Minutes and Actions of Previous Meeting. a. 24.03.26 IAC Meeting DRAFT Minutes. The Minutes of the meeting held on 24.03.26 were reviewed. There were no comments or amendments and the Minutes were recorded as an accurate record. The Minutes were proposed for approval by RP, seconded by SG.	Approved

No.	Discussion	Outcome / Decision
4.	Matters Arising. There are no open matters to discuss.	
5.	Finance, Auditing and Accounts. 5.1. Budget Monitoring Outturn Report 25/26. MP presented the report, highlighting underspends in both Revenue and Capital Budgets and discussing the causes of Capital slippage. MP reported a £400k underspend on the Revenue Budget (<1% of budget) and a £433k underspend on the Capital Programme for the previous FY, providing a summary of the organisation's financial position, including details on government funding received for the major incident at Langdale Moor during the summer of 2025. Whilst noting the very clear and detailed report, SG requested detail on any operational impact incurred due to the capital slippage, particularly regarding Fleet and IT projects. MP explained that delays had been due to specification work being postponed by the major incident, procurement challenges, and broader organisational planning issues, with some IT delays linked to external/global supply constraints leading to national framework procurement difficulties. Despite delays, assurance was provided by MP and NYFRS management that core operational capability had not been compromised and all planned fire appliances and breathing apparatus had been delivered and were operational. There were no instances where statutory duties could not be met due to equipment unavailability, with management crediting ongoing maintenance and recent investments. HC raised a challenge regarding capital programme planning and control, whether effective controls and planning are in place to ensure capital funding is realistically spent in the next financial year. MP acknowledged ongoing work to improve assurance, noting new leadership in Fleet and Estates, and highlighted that internal audit plans would continue to monitor these areas to ensure better planning and delivery. The Committee noted the report.	Noted
6.	Internal Audit. MS proved an update on all internal audit documents. Questions and challenges were fully addressed. 6.1. Progress Report. The FY25/26 Internal Audit Programme is complete and closed, with the Annual Report now finalised. The report provides a full year-end position, with further detail covered under item 6.5 below. For FY26/27, audit activity has started on schedule, and the Fleet Management Audit is now underway. Forward planning is in place, with further audits scheduled to begin through July, leaving the programme in a strong position entering Q2. The Committee noted the report, it demonstrates maturity and improved delivery discipline compared to previous years. 6.2. Follow-Up Report. The work focused on actions from previously weak (negative) assurance areas, alongside selected high and medium actions. Only two items remain outstanding, now reflected as four medium actions after reclassification and refinement. These relate to security framework and health & safety, both showing sufficient progress to reduce risk levels from high. Further work is ongoing, with potential links to future audits, with completion expected by Nov. The overall position is significantly improved, with most actions closed and strong progress compared to the previous year. The Committee noted the report, commenting and acknowledging the positive position. MP concurred, noting this report as the most pleasing of all internal audit reports as it demonstrates <i>delivery</i> against the actions set.	Noted Noted

No.	Discussion	Outcome / Decision
	6.3. Fire and Rescue Plan. The audit examined how the Fire & Rescue Plan is established and delivered, focusing on areas within the service's control (given some elements are set by the Combined Authority). The audit covered the governance, public communication, milestones, and the 'golden thread' from strategy to operational delivery. The outcome was a <i>Substantial Assurance opinion</i>, with only very minor findings (1 low action issue, 2 advisory points). There were no significant concerns identified. CF was able to provide further assurance that the action and advisory points have subsequently been completed. The Committee noted the report, highlighting the strong foundational governance across the planning framework. 6.4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The audit was advisory, led by HR consultants with EDI accreditation which focused on a new and developing area within the organisation. No formal assurance opinion given. The audit was conducted at a time of recent leadership change, enabling an open, non-defensive assessment. Identified the need for a whole-organisation approach, covering objectives, policies, training, governance, reporting, and outputs to provide a prioritised roadmap and baseline and to guide development over the coming months. Overall, the review was intended to support structured progression and embed EDI more effectively across the organisation and highlight the importance of buy-in across the service for effective culture change. Both SG and MP discussed the drivers for EDI work, referencing national scrutiny and sector scandals, with MP further noting the financial and reputational risks of not investing in culture, and the intrinsic value of EDI for organisational effectiveness and staff retention. The Committee acknowledged the difficulty in quantifying the direct costs and benefits of EDI initiatives but agreed that proactive investment in culture and inclusion is preferable to the costs of addressing negative outcomes ("invest to save"), with reference to sector-wide reviews and the need for ongoing progress tracking. The advisory recommendations were accepted as a developmental roadmap. 6.5. Annual Report. MS reported that NYFRS has achieved a final assurance opinion of an <i>adequate and effective framework</i> for risk management, governance, and internal control, with only one high action outstanding and several medium actions, reflecting significant improvement from previous years. MS and CF had reviewed the timeliness of audit report delivery and management responses, noting a few outliers due to periods of leave and process changes, but overall improvement in response times and action delivery, supported by new monthly update processes. The Committee highlighted the importance of action owners being fully informed and involved in agreeing actions, with processes now ensuring no surprises and realistic delivery schedules, and MS emphasising the value of collaborative action wording. MP noted the significant improvement from prior years (and previous negative assurance opinions), further highlighting the need to maintain progress, especially as upcoming audits will revisit previously challenging areas, and stressed the importance of using internal audit to address real risks rather than focusing solely on achieving positive assurance opinions. The Committee noted the heartening report and opinion. 6.6. Sector Briefings. MS summarised recent news for emergency services awareness. The emerging risk radar provides a high-level macro view of risks with a heat map to support horizon scanning and risk register updates. Two areas received further scrutiny: • AI in Control Room Operations. RP inquired about use of AI in emergency call handling. GM provided a detailed response describing that while early-stage exploratory work exists, current systems do not use AI for triage or dispatch, and the focus remains on highly trained operators, with future procurement considering potential AI integration. There is no evidence yet for cost reduction or operational improvement and that public confidence in the system must be a priority.	Noted Noted Noted

No.	Discussion	Outcome / Decision
	• Recruitment and Retention Update. NYFRS management provided an update on recruitment and retention, noting strong recruitment for whole-time staff, but ongoing challenges in on-call workforce, this is reflected across the sector. Recent changes are providing more flexibility but also affecting availability and costs. 6.6.b. External Quality Assessment. MS sought formal IAC approval for the External Quality Assessment (EQA) approach. The EQA will be commissioned later in the year by RSM and will be conducted in line with Global Internal Audit Standards and public sector guidance. The approach outlines the domains to be assessed, providing a high-level view of the scope and coverage of the review. The EQA approach was approved to ensure compliance with audit standards and governance expectations.	Approved
7.	Health & Safety. BI provided a detailed report which highlighted a slight increase in health and safety reports at the start of 2026, attributed to the introduction of new breathing apparatus and fire engines, as well as increased reporting due to enhanced training and awareness among middle managers. Discussion clarified that most fleet-related injuries involved <i>banks persons</i> during vehicle reversing, with the absence of CCTV on appliances noted; future procurement specifications will consider adding reversing cameras, and the use of banks persons remains industry best practice. There is a downward trend in personal injury reports, potentially linked to improved manual handling training and investment in fitness equipment, though causation could not be definitively established. Mandatory health and safety learning compliance remains above 90%, with most non-completions due to staff on long-term absence or secondment. There remains ongoing efforts to improve areas such as stress management training. The Committee noted the report, significantly the downward trend of personal injury and better reporting.	Noted
8.	HMICFRS Update Report. BI provided a progress review on HMICFRS recommendations and thematic inspections, with most actions closed and a few remaining open due to embedding new functions or ongoing negotiations with unions. A thematic inspection on cyber security was recently completed, with further recommendations anticipated. The risk of focusing solely on inspectorate checklists was noted, emphasising the need to balance national standards with local risk profiles and organisational improvement, using FRS Standards as a planning tool without making them the sole driver of activity. NYFRS is continuing with the embedded organisational “self-inspection” approach, conducting internal reviews and trend analysis based on recent inspection rounds, with a target to close outstanding actions by the end of Q2 and ensure comprehensive readiness for the next inspection anticipated for early to mid-2027. The Committee noted the report.	Noted
9.	Performance Indicators. 9.1. Performance Indicators 01.04.25 – 31.03.26. BI reported on the significant uplift of Home Fire Safety Visits which had increased from a historical ~3,500 to ~6,400 during the year, well above the ambitious 5,500 target. This had been achieved and driven by investment in Prevention Teams, improved partnership referrals (NYC, City of York, NYP, housing) and increased productivity of operational crews (+57% year-on-year). The outcome of this investment was a reportable reduction in dwelling fires suggesting positive preventative impact. Operational demand had increased during the period with a +25% increase in fires attended, largely due to hot, dry weather (secondary fires) and an overall +8% increase in total incidents attended. There was a slight rise in false alarms. By qualifying staff with the new Level 2 Fire Safety enabled Fire Safety Checks to increase from 27 to 387.	

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	On-call and workforce availability has declined across the sector (~5–6% annually), however, NYFRS has slowed this trend to ~2% decline, indicating stabilisation. Improvements were attributed to better recruitment, retention, and training and an increased number of qualified drivers and supervisors. Seasonal pressures remain, particularly in August during higher incident demand and reduced availability due to leave patterns. Response Standards were all achieved within SLA with attendance at all incidents in under 13 minutes and to all dwelling fires in under 11 minutes. 9.2. Performance Indicators Apr – May 26. Key areas of performance in the first two months of this FY noted that performance reporting is being refocused on progress against targets rather than year-on-year increases. Prevention work is already ahead of target (19.5% vs expected 16.7%, ~1,100 visits completed) with activity still focused on high-risk households, maintaining quality alongside volume. Strong early delivery in risk-based inspection programme shows as being well ahead of schedule with a high compliance with statutory consultations (98% on time), despite the increased operational demand. On-call availability is continuing to show improvement early in the year, indicating possible recovery following investment in workforce capacity. Response standards targets continue to be met for both overall incidents and dwelling fires in the first two months. Overall, it has been a strong start to the year, with delivery ahead of plan, with good compliance, and early signs of workforce stabilisation. An increase in false alarms, particularly in commercial premises, was noted by MP. Management provided assurance that this had led to prompting further changes in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to address the issue and improve performance reporting frameworks. The Committee noted the positive reports.	Noted
10.	AOB. No further matters were raised for discussion.	
11.	Next Meeting. Thursday 24 th September 2026 at 13:30. Hybrid attendance.	
12.	Date of Remaining 2026 Meetings: Thursday 17th December 2026 at 13:30. Hybrid attendance. Proposed Dates for 2027 Meetings: Thursday 18th March 2027 at 13:30. Hybrid attendance. Thursday 24th June 2027 at 13:30. Hybrid attendance. Thursday 23rd September 2027 at 13:30. Hybrid attendance. Thursday 16th December 2027 at 13:30. Hybrid attendance.	Approved

Actions Agreed:

No.	Action / Update	Owner	Date Issued	Due Date	Date Closed
	No further actions raised.				

Use of Copilot

These Minutes have been supported by the use of Microsoft Copilot. The content has been reviewed and verified by the named reviewer below to ensure it represents an accurate and complete record of the meeting.

Reviewed by: I McClelland – Governance Support Officer

Date reviewed: 30.06.26

Signed off as a true and accurate record:

Name: Roman Pronyszyn - Chair

Date signed off: